

# Alton mayoral candidate holding weekly forums

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**ALTON** - The first of Alton mayoral candidate **Scott Dixon's** weekly coffee hours was "truly informative," he said in a release.

Dixon is running against current **Alton Mayor Brant Walker** as well as **Joshua Young** and **Dan Rauschkolb** in the April 4, 2017, mayoral election. To get in touch with who

he hopes to be his future constituents, Dixon decided to host weekly coffee hours at various local eateries every Saturday morning from 10-11 a.m. These meetings are open to the public.

In a release, Dixon described the first of the meetings as truly informative. It was held on Saturday, Jan. 21, 2017, at **LuciAnna's**, located on State Street in Downtown Alton. Dixon decided to host the first of his weekly meetings there because he believes not enough Altonians are aware of the location and its position as an "excellent coffee and pastry shop right in downtown Alton." He also said the purpose of the meetings was transparency.

"One of my top priorities as a mayoral candidate is being transparent and accessible to the community," Dixon said in a release. "These weekly meetings allow me to proactively learn about the ideas and priorities of Altonians, while they learn about me and my ideas too. A good leader realizes that he or she cannot come up with all the ideas, and the people deserve every possible chance to share what's on their mind."

When Dixon announced his candidacy over the summer of 2016, he said he wanted to help Alton continue its renaissance and revitalize its natural beauty and opportunities for both tourism and activities for the locals. He said he wanted to see Alton become a place to which people could return and even stay while having prosperous and happy futures.

In a Sunday, Jan. 22, release, Dixon said he was satisfied with the first coffee hour.

"I learned as much about the people attending as they did about me," he said. "I was impressed by the level of interest in the issues and their desire to learn about me, my education, experience and ideas, but what didn't surprise me was the deep love of Alton displayed by people attending the event."

On Dixon's end, he said he wanted to provide fact-based information about issues, providing a "reality check" where necessary for the "hyperbole that tends to enter political campaigns."

"The desire to impress can sometimes lead to positives being emphasized at the expense of a balanced picture that also recognizes the challenges," he said in the release. "For example, the campaign literature out there prominently boasts a 5.8 percent drop in overall crime in Alton during the last few years, but those numbers were arrived at by an unusual averaging process that included statistics from earlier years that shouldn't have been in there."

In the release, Dixon quoted official FBI crime statistics, which he said show overall crime is up in Alton from 1,380 in 2013 to 1,460 in 2015. Dixon said he is especially

concerned about violent crime in Alton, which he said has increased from 108 in 2013 to 132 in 2015, which he said was the most recent data available.

"That's a 22 percent increase in violent crime here, and these are real numbers based on official FBI data, not stats altered by playing with the numbers," Dixon said.

Despite those daunting facts, Dixon said he also noted the positives of Alton.

"While Alton has struggled lately, I like to provide balance to offset all the bad news we're hearing lately," he said in the release. "The region all around us is doing really well overall, and Alton can, too. My optimism about Alton's future is as strong as ever, but a positive future logically requires that our city firms make some common sense improvements so that Alton can better compete, because we're certainly not the only city trying to lure residents, businesses, jobs and visitors."

Dixon said one highlight of the city's current conditions is its tourism numbers, with \$456 million coming into the area in 2016 from tourism spending.

Further information and a schedule of upcoming coffee hours can be found at Dixon's official campaign website, [ScottDixonForAlton.org](http://ScottDixonForAlton.org).

The next scheduled coffee hour is set for Saturday, Jan. 28 at **Maeva's Coffee**, located at 1320 Milton Rd.