

Spotlight on Dan Rauschkolb

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - Current Alton Police Lieutenant Dan Rauschkolb is running for mayor of Alton against Joshua Young, Scott Dixon and current Mayor Brant Walker.

Rauschkolb, like Young and Walker in 2013, is running as a write-in candidate, after both the Alton Electoral Board and the Madison County court system determined he could not be placed on the ballot after he allegedly party-switched. Petitions were filed against him by Young and Patrick Schwarte, citing a 2016 case, *Rudd v Lake County, Illinois Electoral Board*, in which a candidate was not allowed to run as an independent after declaring himself a Democrat for a primary race.

Party-switching is what Rauschkolb did after attempting to run against Young in an unprecedented primary race, which would have taken place on Feb. 28, 2017. Young is still running as a Progressive Democrat, but Rauschkolb filed to run as an independent following both he and Young's failure to submit a certificate of economic interest to the Madison County Clerk. Both Rauschkolb and Young were suspicious of those circumstances, believing the city may have had something to do with it.

During a March 29, 2017, [debate on WBGZ radio hosted by Mark Ellebracht](#), Young, Dixon and Walker were able to debate, but Rauschkolb was not able to attend. Ellebracht interviewed Rauschkolb independently on Tuesday, March 28, 2017. These are Rauschkolb's responses to the questions asked to the other three candidates. Riverbender.com chose to include these separately out of fairness to the candidates, because Rauschkolb was unable to defend himself or argue his points against his opponents.

Introduction

Rauschkolb said the theme of his campaign is "safe neighborhoods," saying Alton needs to "focus on the basics" before "moving onto big projects." He said he moved his family to Alton 22 years ago from Belleville after taking the position as a police officer in the Alton Police Department. Rauschkolb is currently a lieutenant.

Why are you running for mayor?

Rauschkolb said he was running for mayor because he has been "disappointed" with the way the city has been running under Walker. He said Walker's administration has not been doing the basics well, citing road problems, sidewalk issues and crime rates as evidence. He also said he was worried about lethal drugs in the community.

"I'm worried about the heroin problem," he said. "It affects Alton and everyone who lives here."

Alton has had to deal with a tight budget in recent years, mostly due to police and fire pensions and less money coming from the state. What are some of your ideas to fix those things?

He said the budget's go "up and down like a business cycle," saying Alton needs more revenue sources. He said the city is already overtaxed, so he wanted to bring tourism and more businesses to the area.

How do you propose to address public safety issues?

Rauschkolb said there is a debate about whether or not crime is up in Alton (overall crime is down 11 percent, violent crime is also down when compared to the previous administration, however it is trending upward with 2014 and 2016 both being peaks of violence over the last five years in Alton). He said Alton does have some of the highest crime numbers per capita in the county (true), meaning he knows crime is an issue.

"If we compare ourselves to other nearby cities, our crime rate is bad," he said. "How do we solve this? It's simple. We need to make strong neighborhoods. I would like to do some task force for heroin, and I also want to work with fed and state agencies, and capitalize on their resources."

He said bringing in higher agencies would bring pension savings as well.

Rauschkolb said he was a member of several task forces, such as Weed and Seed and Line in the Sand, as well as police agencies throughout the county. Rauschkolb said he would work with Altonians as well as neighboring communities to address some of Alton's public safety concerns.

What's your take on the community policing platform?

"I think Mayor Walker has been doing a community policing platform and I commend him on that," he said. "But it's not something new. We've been doing it since I've been here."

Much of the community policing initiatives have been proposed by the police unions, not the city, Rauschkolb said (true), but he was happy to see the city tackle issues with policing.

"I'm pretty proud of the Alton Police Department," Rauschkolb said, saying Alton has not had the issues with police other communities have.

Rauschkolb said Alton has great community leaders, which he credits for its not having the problems other St. Louis Metro Area communities may. He said he spoke with the mayor of Ferguson, Missouri, comparing notes between his town and Alton.

"I think there's a lot of conversation and communications going on now, we just need to foster that," he said.

Do you have an idea or plan, what would your suggestions be as mayor to handle the riverfront and amphitheater?

"I think it has a lot to do with scheduling," Rauschkolb said. "I think we need an online schedule, so it's available for everyone to know the schedule."

Rauschkolb also said he would work to bring the Alton Expo back, an idea many in the city would appreciate, according to social media.

"There is some issues with any building or anything on the riverfront, and there's an issue with flooding none of the other candidates have addressed," he said.

He said the Army Corps of Engineers has portable flood walls, which he said would save hundreds of thousands of dollars, and could be placed quickly and easily. He said flooding must be addressed before anything can be done at the riverfront or Downtown Alton.

Rauschkolb also said he would like to speak with the Corps of Engineers about adding a fishing pier - something he said would be decently cheap and popular.

He said he would like to see Alton's amphitheater have both large national events and small local events. He said he would like to see it work like St. Charles's amphitheater, adding he was aware of bathroom facility and parking issues as well.

What would you like to see in economic development and how could the city help with that?

Rauschkolb said he wanted to do an overall plan, and make Alton family-friendly to bring more tourism. He said Alton needs to focus on families, by adding attractions to youth and children.

He said he liked seeing the mall expanding, but said he had a lot of questions regarding stores coming. He said he "did not want to build the Taj Mahal, just to see it empty."

"I'm positive on industry, I think it's all about us soliciting industries to come here," he said regarding industrial areas near Broadway.

Rauschkolb again championed the creation of a technology business park in empty land, left undeveloped. He also said he would like to add free Wi-Fi to the business infrastructure.

What is the city's role in improving quality of life?

"Quality of life is basically doing city services well," he said.

Rauschkolb said he receives complaints from citizens regarding road conditions, animal control, drugs, high weeds and trash. He said those conditions should be addressed immediately and be addressed right. He said he would use PACUP and get some services paid for without taxpayers.

"Alton is blessed with having groups of volunteers, and I would want to continue with how they volunteer, they have made the city great," he said.

He said those people, and not the government make the city great.

Why should they vote for you?

Rauschkolb said he has worked through four administrations and would not offer "pipe dreams." He said he fully believed he could do all the things he promised, by going back to its basics.