

Letter To The Editor: Drake Comments About Not Being Re-Appointed To Alton Civil Service Commission

by Mike Drake
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Letter to the Editor:

Over the years, I served the city in many ways, as a department head, of Alton's Park, Rec, Golf, and Forestry, for 11 years. Over the years I was appointed to and served on many commissions, one for well over 10 years. Mayors must have felt I added something to these commissions.

I took those appointments seriously. Never even thought about resigning from any, was never a one termer. I served because I am a lifelong resident of Alton, as were my parents and their parents before them. I love my city, and if there was a service I could provide, I felt it was my duty to serve.

Previous Mayor Brant Walker appointed me to the Civil Service Commission 3 years ago. My commission expired this month, and based on merit, I should have been reappointed to serve another three. This three-person Civil Service Commission's duties are to interview applicants for full-time city jobs, police, fire, public works, and the other city departments. To do my best, I studied Civil Service ordinances and regulations, and took the Open Meeting Act test annually to stay certified. My attendance at our regular and special, short-notice meetings was stellar. I assisted Human Resources edit some of the interview questions to make them clearer and more focused for the department for which we were interviewing. When Alton needed a commissioner to represent our police department at the Southwestern Police Consortium, and to help with testing of potential police candidates at the academy at SWIC in O'Fallon, on a Saturday, I might add, I volunteered.

I considered it my duty and it was an honor to represent my city. At the July 10 City Council meeting, I was not reappointed; our mayor chose not to do so. I was asked by many people if I had resigned... No, I 100% did not resign! So, if I was such a good commissioner, why did he not reappoint me? That answer is simple. Mayoral appointments are a perk granted to every mayor, to reward his supporters and to ensure future allegiance to him. I am not a supporter of Mr. Goins, and I paid the price for voicing my opinion. His getting elected was the result of the perfect storm, the Walker /COVID issue, plus Goins had backing from those that threw seemingly endless handfuls of money at him. He also got letters of support from several influential people who must now regret having their names linked to those letters.

I have never seen such a lack of leadership or a lack of effort to perform the duties he was elected to carry out. There is no transparency and not much work gets done. Despite Alton having a budget deficit of well over a million dollars, he started his term by redecorating his already nicely furnished office, threw out raises like Halloween candy, and just recently paid \$3,000 in membership dues to join an organization that previous mayors did not pay, but were still members. Paying that \$3,000 means that he gets to travel to out-of-state meetings at the expense of the Alton taxpayer.

Another year and a half of Alton teetering on this slippery slope is bad enough, but if re-elected, and I understand he does plan to run, that would mean four more years of even more time out of his office, more Alton taxpayer-funded vacations, ribbon cuttings and photo ops. Alton can't take any more of this, we need to move forward. Don't take my word for this, come to the city meetings, and see for yourself.

Mike Drake

Alton

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