

## **“Reasons for Running” by James Dixon**

### **Campaign Kickoff Event, March 14, 2009**

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Let me begin by saying *thanks* to all of you who took the time out of your busy schedule today. We all came together for a specific reason, **CHANGE!** A special man said on one of his speeches “*We are hungry for change and we are ready to believe again.*” That man is now our 44<sup>th</sup> President, Barack Obama. Well, I feel White Township is in the midst of change and we need to “make a difference”.

But let me tell you how I came to be here. As most of you know, I am not a native of this great state. I moved to Indiana almost 4 years ago. I applied and was accepted as a manager at the Bon-Ton Department Store. And my mission was to change the Bon-Ton into a more appealing, comfortable place to shop. My work days were long and tedious -- reworking fixtures and merchandise for the consumer to shop as well as maneuver around the store.

As for a few of you folks here today, you remember what I am talking about. I would hear about issues within the store from unhappy customers and would listen to their concerns. I took every issue seriously. The issues might not have been handled in the best interest, but the customer knew I was an ally for them. I have made lasting friendships here: some of which are here today. It was here that we learned to disagree, without being disagreeable. It is possible to compromise so long as you know those fundamental principles can never be compromised. When we are willing to listen to each other; it is then that we can see the best in people and not the worst.

The road ahead will not come easy, partly because we have fine candidates in this race, fierce competitors who are worthy of our respect and admiration. But, there are differences between the candidates. We have to remember this is a contest for White Township Supervisor. So this will not be easy. We're up against the belief that White Township is good the way it is. *But change is coming!* The change of timbering White Woods for a profit and the construction of the Kovalchick center and the true impact it will have on the current police service.

The timbering of White Woods has been an issue for the residents of White Township since the Plan was introduced in April of 2007. At the time of the proposed plan, the current Supervisors were willing to disrupt 229 of the 245 acres. This would displace wildlife, erode the soil, and cause unrest for the residents around White Woods. This plan has a proposed 10 year forecast with a timbering profit of \$166,000. I know I wouldn't want the heavy logging trucks driving by my house and cause the roads to erode away for the next 10 years. Would you? In addition, when the plan was introduced in 2007, the economy was well off and the timber prices were good. Now, in 2009, with the economy in poor shape, jobless rate at a 20 year high, do you think the timber prices would still be purchased for \$166,000? I think not!

We need a change to this destruction of this lovely park. Have some of you walked through this park with your dogs? I know I have. Do a few of you walk the scenic trails in the park? I know some of my friends do - especially for exercise and the fresh clean air. And, with spring around the corner, new births will be happening throughout the park. If you are in the woods you might see a fawn walking for the first

time. Or a family of cardinals feeding their chirping hatchlings. Or even the new growth of an orchid that is blooming on a mossy log. Who can put a price or even think of destroying such precious memories.

The change we seek has always required great struggle and great sacrifice. So let me remind you today that change will not be easy. Change will take time. There might be setbacks and sometimes I will make mistakes, but as hard as I work, I will make a difference for the hope of the people who elected me.

For the last four years changes have been happening at IUP. A new president, new dorms, and now the Kovalchick center. This center is to bring in events that Indiana has not been able to hold in the past. With the new center means new hotels, new restaurants, and a new influx of people to these places.

I bring up this issue because currently our police service is being provided by the state police. If these new places and venues have “problems” how long will it take to respond? Will it mean life or death? Are you willing to gamble your life or your loved-ones life?

Currently, the Township does not pay for services rendered by the state police. But there is a bill before the house in Harrisburg stating “*any municipality using state police for service will be subject to pay \$100 per resident.*” That would make White Township pay \$1.5 million for services it is receiving. With the paying of police service and not getting better quality service, do you think that is fair? Most White Township residents I have been speaking to didn’t know that the state police do not uphold the township laws.

For example the state police do not enforce parking violators. More over, the state police do not do education lectures to our elementary age school children. When was the last time you saw a state patrol car in your neighborhood? Do we want to pay for a police service that does nothing?

Well, the change is coming and we need to be the hope, because there are people across this township who is counting on us. We need to step up and enact our right to have a police service or at least regionalize with the borough police. Currently the borough only patrols a 2 square mile radius. Their officers are seen patrolling the neighborhoods, foot patrolling downtown, and interacting with business owners as well as the patrons. Do we as a township have that interaction with the state police? NO! So if I am elected this issue will be of great concern for every man, woman, and child living in White Township as well as the visitors we receive at our restaurants, hotels, and businesses.

Our great leader once said *“this election is about the past vs. the future. It is about whether we settle for the same distractions and drama that passes for politics today or whether we reach for a politics of common sense and innovation, a politics of shared sacrifice and shared prosperity.”* Yes, this was for change in running the election for the White House but, to me it means so much more as I run for White Township Supervisor.

We need to look to our candidates and ask, are they looking to the future or are they looking at the here and now. I know **I** am looking

to the future and seeing how great Indiana and White Township can be!  
Yes we can! Yes we can make a difference!

Thank you.