



Interview with Jonathan Barfield

1. How long have you served on the board?

I have been on this board for 5 1/2 years.

2. Will you run for re-election when your term expires?

No because I am currently running for Congress.

3. What are your local priorities?

- a) Education - making sure we provide the right resources to our schools.
- b) Job creation and economic development. I worked hard to provide the right incentives to help companies looking to come here or stay here to increase their work force.
- c) Beach renourishment and dredging. Being a coastal town, tourism is a big part of our economy. We need to keep the beaches accessible.

4. What issues hold the most importance to you?

Education. I have children who are in the school system so I know how important teachers are. It's important to have the right people with the right skills to help our children get the right education.

5. Are there any long-term concerns you have about our county?

There's great discussion right now within our community about what type of economy we want to be and what type of industry we want to recruit to our community.

6. What role does the Board of Commissions play in addressing those concerns?

We set the zoning regulations for the county which tells business where and how they can set up.

7. What are the biggest issues that citizens ask you about?

The biggest are environmental issue: water and air quality. Second is probably jobs and economic development.

8. What are some of the responsibilities of county governments that you were not aware of when you ran for office?

My father was a county commissioner for 12 years so I didn't have any real surprises.

9. What is the hardest decision you have faced as a county commissioner?

Our county had an opportunity to accept a grant from our health department for female contraceptives. Our board decided not to accept the grant. I essentially agreed with them. After the vote, I discussed the issue with my wife and realized the error of our decision. I immediately called the media and began to work on correcting it. Eventually, the board reversed its decision.

10. What made you want to be a County Commissioner?

When I was the President of the Wilmington Association of Realtors, I interacted with many elected officials including county commissioners. In 2008, there was a parade in front of the barber shop my family owned. Seeing the boys and girls who looked like me, I realized they needed to see someone like them in a position of authority. My father was the first African American county commissioner and now, I am the second.

11. What makes you want to be in Congress?

Being a county commissioner and in the leadership of the Board of Realtors, I would attend legislative conferences every year. I began to become concerned when I saw the voting record of our current representative. He announced his retirement which paved the way for my win in the primary.