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Robeson County 4-H

I attended a Robeson County Commissioners meeting on Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> where I had the pleasure of meeting the following County Commissioners Raymond Cummings and Tom Taylor as well as the County Commissioner Chairman Noah Woods and the Assistant County Manager Jason King. During this meeting I observed protocol on the proceedings of a meeting and interviewed a few of the listed members of the County Commissioners.

Amongst the topics and issues that were addressed during the meeting Solar Farms seemed to be the most controversial. Solar Farms are an installation or area of land in which a large number of solar panels are set up in order to generate electricity. This is an issue within our county because Solar Farms require that land used for purposes such as agriculture be converted and when they are placed next to residential areas they are seen to decrease property value. When the council would address these issues they would begin in a formal manner which would dissolve and become more of a conversation between the council members and the person addressing them.

The first Council member I interviewed was the Commissioner Raymond Cummings, who has served on the board for nineteen plus years. I asked him what was one of the most pressing and important issues he has had to decide on, while being a member of the board. He replied saying that the most pressing issue is job creation. Jobs are the light bulb of the community and with economic development they are a top priority. He also said that creating jobs can become difficult due to the competition for natural resources.

Lastly, I interviewed Commissioner Tom Taylor who has been on the board for sixteen years. I asked him what he enjoys most about being a part of the board and he responded saying he enjoys helping the people of the community. When addressing issues he has to keep in mind to do what is best for the community as a whole and keep the community's best interest at heart. He makes an effort to see the good of each issue and how they benefit as well as how they hinder the community. The next question I asked was what he considered a long-term concern of the county would be. He said that the longest concern would be taxes and services, specifically making sure that there are enough affordable services available.

After interviewing these members of the board I could see that they truly enjoyed what they do. I noticed how light the room was instead of it being full of bad energy and stuffiness. I saw that each of the members of the board had the best interest of the community at heart. During the meeting they were engaged in the issues at hand and handled the meeting with humor as well as professionalism and seriousness. They allowed each person to speak before addressing them and they were understanding and compassionate. After attending this meeting my perception of County meetings have changed and I look forward to being a more informed citizen.