

PRAYER

Continued from 1A

Crime that will take place at John A. Holmes High School. The annual event is sponsored by the Edenton Police Department.

She said the Citizens Against Violence group also plans to be a "visible presence" at Aces football games this fall. They plan to wear special shirts so people will notice them and hopefully ask questions about what they're doing and how citizens can get involved in this grassroots effort to curb violence in our community.

They have also established a Facebook page to reach out to those in the community who use social media, Harrell said.

Police Chief Jay Fortenbery has been extremely

"He is passionate about this. We are so lucky to have him in our community."

Missie Harrell
Prayer group leader

supportive of the group's efforts.

"He is passionate about this," Harrell said. "We are so lucky to have him in our community."

Harrell added that the community as a whole has also offered support for their efforts.

"We have had tremendous support from the community," she said.

Harrell said that the group wants to use that support to make a real difference in the community.

"We want to change lives," she said.

SOLAR

Continued from 1A

also would have to submit a decommissioning plan in the event their company ceased operations. Solar developers would have to provide proof of liability insurance, and a surety bond equal to 100 percent of the cost of decommissioning their solar facility. In addition, developers would have only 12 months to decommission an abandoned solar project.

Also, any proposed changes to the county's solar ordinance would require developers to seek a conditional use permit review by county commissioners instead of from the Planning Board. Commissioners would determine on a case-by-case basis whether a solar farm could locate within agricultural, commercial and industrial zoning districts.

Planning officials said they reviewed the solar farm regulations in a number of counties — Brunswick, Camden, Gates, Pasquotank and Perquimans — as well as solar farm regulations suggested by Chowan residents Robert Kirby and Kevin Stroud before deciding on their recommendations.

Prior to the board's decision, speakers both for solar development against it offered the board their views.

Linda Nwadike, project manager for SunEnergy1, said her company supports the board's proposed changes because they'll help provide guidance on planning solar projects in Chowan.

"It's actually great for us as a company because it tells us this is what you guys require, that we make sure that we meet or exceed this, and that we move on," she said. "I love the fact that you are reviewing the ordinance and making changes to it. I have no issue with stricter rules and making sure we meet these rules, but I want you to consider to not make it hard for an industry to come to Chowan County."

Vickie Layden presented the board with a petition signed by 90 people opposed to development of a solar farm on Gliden Road. She also submitted a packet she said contained information about the hazards of solar panels.

"If there is hazardous materials in these things, which there is or isn't depending on who you talk to or listen to or what research you go after, ... do we really want it right beside our residence?" said Layden, whose Gliden Road home borders a proposed solar farm.

Tom Credle of Osprey Drive said he was concerned a large storm might scatter solar panels, requiring cleanup by a hazardous materials team.

"If this stuff blows in all directions and lands in your driveway, yard, pond or pasture — it's your debris," he said. "It doesn't matter where it came from. If it is to be considered hazardous material debris ... then you may not be able to mess with it other than mechanically pushing it out of the way."

Credle said because federal and state authorities do

not have a plan to address his concern about solar panel cleanup, the county would have to remove the debris itself. That could be expensive, he said.

Credle said because the Planning Board's recommendations don't take debris cleanup into account, the board should recommend commissioners extend the current solar farm moratorium to a year. Besides giving county officials time to determine what their costs of cleanup might be, extending the moratorium would also give state and Chowan emergency planning officials time to create a plan for removing hazardous materials, he said.

Addressing both Layden's and Credle's concerns, Nwadike said solar panels are not hazardous.

"There's no emission in it. There are no hazardous materials," she said.

As for debris removal, it's governed by standards set by federal and state laws, Nwadike said.

"There are various waste management practices that we need to meet," she said. "Whether federal or state, (what we do) must be satisfied to these standards."

Regarding decommissioning of solar farms, Nwadike said there's never been one decommissioned, and it's likely none ever will be decommissioned as long as "there's money there" from harnessing solar energy.

"Solar farming is a business decision, so as to decommissioning, if money is being made, why would someone decommission?" she asked.

Instead of decommissioning solar farms, Nwadike said she envisions developers adjusting to changes in technology, switching out older solar panels for newer, more efficient ones.

Nwadike said SunEnergy1 has no disagreement with the proposal's requirements for setbacks, buffering or liability insurance. But she noted the board's

recommendation on decommissioning solar farms was taken from Camden County's ordinance.

Nwadike said Camden County is considering revisions to its ordinance in August, so she asked if Chowan County would do the same thing. She asked the board to make a decision based on Chowan's needs, not another county's.

"I want to ask you to think twice and not just blindly make a decision based on what other counties are doing," she said.

Nwadike said a number of state agencies already review prospective solar farms for approval before they are built. She asked if a solar developer is able to meet state and federal requirements, why should a county's permitting process be more strict.

But resident Dottie DeHart said it was important for Chowan officials to ensure solar farm rules are specific to Chowan.

"These rules are there for the protection of the citizens and property of this county," she said. "Please don't sacrifice our citizens to placate a developer who will not be truly invested in this county; a developer who is thriving on tax incentives — taxes that Chowan County will not be able to receive. ... We should not let a developer come here who does not plan to share, pay their fair share or plant themselves here for the duration."

Nwadike, however, said SunEnergy1 is invested in Chowan, even though it hasn't built a project in the county.

"We want to be good neighbors," she said. "We do want to invest here. We have donated to the Steamers baseball team and we haven't yet built anything here in the county. We are trying to be good neighbors, work with the county and make sure we are actually giving something back to the county. ... We want to work with you."

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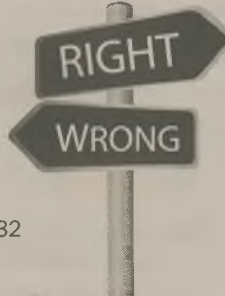
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