

2007 was a year of trials and tribulations! After being sworn in as the newest commissioner and attending my first meeting I felt as though my time was not my own anymore. I found out quickly that you are a commissioner 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. There have been many emotional meetings where I had to take a stand, (sometimes the lone vote) and many times it got very heated. As a newly elected commissioner I have learned the next month will bring new petitions and more issues that need the same level of attention.

I have been somewhat surprised at how many people recognize me out in public, as well as the number of calls I receive on a regular basis. As you can imagine, these calls are for a variety of reasons. Sometimes I just have to make a phone call on someone's behalf, or just listen to a complaint, but it is all in a days work. I decided early on to have a "District Day" where people from my district can come to the office and talk to me... "one on one". District Days give people the opportunity to express their concerns. Also, I had a series of town hall meetings for the district. All and all, it was a good year for district two.

My focus this year is to get our planned \$1.7 million park completed. It is the first phase of a two-phase process and we will need an additional \$1.5 million to complete the second phase. I will, also, be heavily involved in completing the planned 18,000 square foot library. This will be Newton County's second library and with the estimated 30,000 people who live in the western end of the county it is desperately needed. I am so pleased it will be located there, convenient to our children, young adults and senior citizens to take advantage of.

As you can already see I've got my work cut out for me and I am looking forward to a great 2008!

Commissioner

Earnest L Simmons