A Public Hearing on a Proposed Airport: 
Economic Boon or Environmental Mistake?

Overview
Students will assume the characters of various stakeholders living in the fictitious county of Dogwood, NC and voice their opinion regarding the proposed construction of an airport by participating in a simulated Planning Commission hearing. Students will gain an understanding of one of the many ways they can be an informed citizen and participate in their local government’s decision making.

Grade
10

North Carolina Essential Standards for American History: The Founding Principles, Civics & Economics
- FP.C&G.2.1 - Analyze the structures of national, state and local governments in terms of ways they are organized to maintain order, security, welfare of the public and the protection of citizens (e.g., federalism, the three branches, court system, jurisdictions, judicial process, agencies, etc.)
- FP.C&G.2.2 - Summarize the functions of North Carolina state and local governments within the federal system of government (e.g., local charters, maintain a militia, pass ordinances and laws, collect taxes, supervise elections, maintain highways, types of local governments, etc.).
- FP.C&G.2.6 - Evaluate the authority federal, state and local governments have over individuals’ rights and privileges (e.g., Bill of Rights, Delegated Powers, Reserved Powers, Concurrent Powers, Pardons, Writ of habeas corpus, Judicial Process, states’ rights, Patriot Act, etc.)
- FP.C&G.2.7 - Analyze contemporary issues and governmental responses at the local, state, and national levels in terms of how they promote the public interest and/or general welfare (e.g., taxes, immigration, naturalization, civil rights, economic development, annexation, redistricting, zoning, national security, health care, etc.)
- FP.C&G.3.1 - Analyze how the rule of law establishes limits on both the governed and those who govern while holding true to the ideal of equal protection under the law (e.g., the Fourteenth Amendments, Americans with Disabilities Act, equal opportunity legislation.)
- FP.C&G.3.2 - Compare lawmaking processes of federal, state and local governments (e.g., committee system, legislative process, bills, laws, veto, filibuster, cloture, proposition, etc.)
- FP.C&G.3.3 - Analyze laws and policies in terms of their intended purposes, who has authority to create them and how they are enforced (e.g., laws, policies, public policy, regulatory, symbolic, procedural, etc.)
- FP.C&G.3.4 - Explain how individual rights are protected by varieties of law (e.g., Bill of Rights, Supreme Court Decisions, constitutional law, criminal law, civil law, Tort, Administrative law, Statutory law and International law, etc.)

Essential Questions
- What authority do public officials possess?
- In what ways do the decisions of local government officials impact each individual?
- What are my responsibilities and duties as a citizen?
- What skills are necessary for negotiation, compromise, debate, and consensus?
- What methods exist for citizen input on public policy?
- What do local governments do to inform their citizens?
- What are the basic guidelines for participation in public hearings and public meetings?
- How do the events of my community directly impact local policy?
- What combined factors impact local policy, and how are these factors related?
Materials
- Dogwood County Govt. Hearing Memo, attached
- Tar Heel City Gazette, attached
- Stakeholder Roles, attached
- Attorney, Clerk or Deputy Clerk to the Board, Planner, or Planning Board Secretary (optional)*
  *Contact the office of your choice 2-4 weeks in advance of this lesson to explain the activity and to ask for assistance in guiding the students in holding a mock public hearing. Any of the people listed above will be familiar with practices in your community. After making an initial contact, follow up with an e-mail including the date, time, location, parking arrangements, school procedures for guests, and a complete set of materials for the activity. It is highly recommended to invite a resource person to your classroom when doing this activity. A representative from your local government can not only provide valued assistance in this activity, but can also give your students a chance to interact with and learn from a local government official.
- Participating in Local Government, worksheet attached

Duration
60-90 minutes

Procedure

Setting up the Simulation

1. Project the Dogwood County Govt. Hearing memo (attached) as students enter class. As they read it, explain that each of them will be serving as Dogwood County community members who have an opinion regarding a proposed airport in their county’s city of Tar Heel. Before beginning, brainstorm:
   - What benefits might an airport bring to your community?
   - What negative effects might an airport create?

2. Distribute the Tar Heel City Gazette (attached) to each student and instruct them to read the information. Afterwards, discuss:
   - What is a Planning Commission, and what decision do they have to make currently in Dogwood County? *(Generally, a local Commission, which can also be referred to as a Board or Committee, serves as an advisory group. Members of a Planning Commission are generally appointed officials who make land use studies and recommendations, as well as review and recommend plans, policies, ordinances and amendments for their county or city. In this case, the Dogwood County Planning Commission is responsible for determining whether to recommend or not recommend the construction of an airport in Dogwood County to the Board of County Commissioners.)*
   - What do you think will affect the Planning Commission’s final decision on its recommendation to the Dogwood Board of County Commissioners? *(information shared at the public hearing; citizen turnout and opinions; economic factors; personal interests; etc.)*
   - What are the responsibilities of a Board of County Commissioners? *(responsible for county government, set local property tax rate, adopts county budget, passes ordinances, resolutions, and orders to establish county policies; appoints a clerk to keep official records of meetings and decisions; provides information to citizens about the county; etc. In this simulation the Board must determine if the construction of an airport in their county will benefit the common good. They have requested a recommendation from the Planning Commission to assist in this matter)*

Preparing for the Simulation

3. Explain to students that they will each be participating in the hearing by either:
• working in partners as a stakeholder in favor of the airport who delivers a two-minute presentation to the Planning Commission,
• working in partners as a stakeholder opposed to the airport who delivers a two-minute presentation to the Planning Commission, or
• working in a group as a member of the undecided Planning Commission who must determine what to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners regarding the airport’s construction.

4. Based on the number of students in your class, divide the class as you see fit, with approximately 5-8 students working in a group as the Planning Commission members, and the rest of the class divided into partners, with an even number of proponent partners and opponent partners. Predetermine which of the attached roles you will use, since most likely your class will not be large enough to utilize all roles, then assign the roles to students. (Note that students working in a group as the Planning Commission members will each receive their own role. Students working in partners as an opponent or proponent will receive one role that they will work together on.) The roles fall in the following three categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Favor of Airport</th>
<th>Opposed to Airport</th>
<th>Planning Commission(Undecided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wagner</td>
<td>Todd</td>
<td>Alden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saunders</td>
<td>Weber</td>
<td>Goldmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calhoun</td>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>Delius</td>
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<td>Ives</td>
<td>Hines</td>
<td>Bartlett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strauss</td>
<td>Allen</td>
<td>Jones</td>
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<td>Nielson</td>
<td>Michaels</td>
<td>Staley</td>
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<td>Jablonski</td>
<td>Vittorio</td>
<td>Mann</td>
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<td>Spofford</td>
<td>Caldwell</td>
<td>Stanton</td>
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<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Mahler</td>
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</tbody>
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*Students should use their own first names with their assigned last name.

5. After passing out the roles, give the following instructions:

• **Proponent and Opponent Partners:**
  As partners, spend the next 15 minutes reviewing the citizen assigned to you and determining how to convince the Planning Commission to vote according to your beliefs. Review the airport controversy, and prepare a two-minute speech to present to the Commission at the hearing in which you (in the role assigned) introduce yourself, state your opinion on the airport, and explain why you feel as you do. While preparing your two-minute speech, partners should consider what skills will be necessary to convince the Planning Commission members to see things your way. You should also consider what the other side may say that contradicts your beliefs. One of you will then assume your character and present to the Commission. The hearing will begin with the Chair calling a Proponent up to speak, followed by an Opponent, and so on. While only one student in each partner will present the two-minute speech, both should be prepared to answer any questions the Planning Commission may have of you after your speech. Once all citizens have presented their 2 minute speeches, the Chair will call for a break. During this time all proponents and opponents will be able to merge into a team, strategize together, and prepare a 3-minute closing statement as a group to present to the Planning Commission.

• **Planning Commission Members**
  As an undecided group, you all have a tough decision in front of you. You will be hearing 2 minute presentations from multiple citizens who support the construction of an airport, and others who do not. Ideally, you would find a way to please both sides of this argument, but realistically, that’s not going to be easy. When your group meeting begins, under the leadership of Chair Jones, each of you must introduce yourselves in your political character, and spend the next 15-20 min. discussing the
pros and cons of both sides of the airport argument (in character). Also, since you can ask 1-2 questions of any citizen who presents at the hearing, as a group create a list of questions for each side that you may want to ask. The newspaper sampling of opinions will be particularly beneficial to you as you infer what you may hear today. Chair Jones will then lead the hearing, calling Proponents and Opponents up to speak and opening the floor for questions from the Commission of the presenting citizens. Chair Jones will also call for a break after all two minute presentations have been delivered, at which point all opponents and proponents may group up to prepare a closing statement. During this time, you will meet as a Commission to discuss where your opinions are currently at. You will then hear each group’s closing statement and ask any remaining questions. Finally, Chair Jones will close the public comment section of the hearing and lead the Commission in an open deliberation where you determine whether the airport construction should be approved or not, based on your character’s beliefs and how he/she would have been influenced in this process.

6. Accept any questions, review your expectations for partner and group work, and allow students to begin their planning. While students are working, arrange your classroom as similar as possible to the set up for a public hearing (Seats for Planning Commission members should be at the front of the room, facing a table at which presenters will step up to for their presentation. All citizens should be on the sides of or behind the table facing the Commission members.)

7. As this simulation is most effective when student lead, during the planning process teachers should confer with the student playing the Chair of the Planning Commission (Jones) to ensure the student understands how to conduct the meeting. Jones should be prepared to:
   • Call the meeting to order, welcome everyone, and summarize the purpose of the hearing.
   • Explain that he/she will call presenting citizens up by name, starting with a citizen from the Proponent side, followed by an Opponent, and so on until all citizens have spoken (*Teachers should provide the list of names to Jones based on the attached proponent and opponent roles they choose to use).
   • Remind citizens that they may be questioned by the Commission after their two-minute presentation (*remind students that while only one member of the partner will present the two-minute speech, both students can answer any questions asked).
   • After all proponents and opponents have presented their two minute speeches, call for a five-minute break, during which time all proponents and opponents will divide into two groups to discuss and prepare a three-minute closing statement.
   • During the break, Commission members should group up to discuss what they are currently thinking regarding the airport construction
   • After the five minutes, Jones will welcome all citizens back, calling for the Proponent closing statement and the Opponent closing statement. Jones can also allow Commission members to ask any lingering questions.
   • Finally, Jones will close the public comment session of the hearing and lead the Commission in an open deliberation of how to report on the proposed airport to the Board of County Commissioners.

➤ **Note**: Teachers may also choose to assign one of the Commission members to be a Vice Chair, so that Jones has assistance if needed. Likewise, the teacher should be available to help Jones move the hearing along if needed, but should keep the focus on the students.

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**Conducting the Simulation**

8. Once students are finished planning, hold the public hearing (allowing for around 40+ minutes). In political character Chair Jones should call the hearing to order following the process as described above. Once all Proponents and Opponents have delivered their two-minute presentation and been questioned, and after Proponents and Opponents have gathered in two groups to discuss and prepare a closing statement and
been questioned, the Chair will close the public comment session and lead the Planning Commission in an open deliberation in which they discuss their current opinions on the airport construction. Whether or not the commission members can reach consensus, have them vote at the end on whether to advise the County Commissioners to allow the construction of the airport or not.

Debriefing the Simulation

9. After the Planning Commission members have discussed and voted, have the students give a round of applause for all of their hard work, and debrief:
   • How did you feel participating as your character in this activity?
   • Reflect on the strategy you chose for presenting your views to the Planning Commission (individual two minute presentations or final group statement). Why did you make the choices you made? In looking back, what was effective about your presentation? What would you improve if you did this again?
   • What skills does one need to convince someone of your stance/views?
   • Did any of your opinions change based on a point raised by someone of the opposite view? If so, what was it that persuaded you?
   • What factors influence city and county officials in the decisions they make?
   • What factors influence citizens in the stance they take on public issues (media, propaganda, gossip, etc.)?
   • What would happen if citizens did not make their opinions known on local issues such as the airport controversy? How might our communities be affected?
   • Even when trying to make the best decision for their community, are policy makers likely to satisfy everyone with that decision? Why or why not?
   • Would you want to be a local government employee who makes these kinds of decisions? Why or why not?
   • Why is it important to be aware of the decisions our local governments are considering and making?
   • Why is the work of local government officials relevant to each of us as individuals? How are we impacted by such decisions?
   • Can you connect this simulated issue to any local issues in your community? (i.e. Dorthea Dix hospital in Raleigh)
   • If the airport construction were an issue being considered in your own community, what would your opinion be and why? What could you do to express this opinion and make a difference in the decision that is made by officials?

10. Assign the attached response sheet for homework to review the importance of local government.

Culminating Activities

• Assign students to assume the role of a journalist and write a newspaper article summarizing the hearing for citizens who were not present. Students can interview each other as their characters to obtain quotes for their articles. You can also allow students to share their completed articles in class (out loud or by swapping articles). Have students evaluate their product by asking:
  ▪ Were the news stories fair or biased? Explain.
  ▪ What did each reporter choose to include or leave out?
  ▪ What role does the media have in informing the public and influencing public opinion?
• Students can also have the option of becoming a TV news anchor, writing a newscast regarding the hearing that they then present to the class. Reflect using the same questions above.
• Invite a resource person to your classroom (local government officials such as an Attorney, Clerk or Deputy Clerk to the Board, Planner, or Planning Board Secretary)
• Attend a local hearing, commissioner’s meeting, or city council meeting
• Use any of the discussion questions throughout the lesson as written response questions.
Differentiation

Students with special needs

- Students who do not work well in partners or groups may work alone. Assign them a role and have them write out what they believe their character would say to the Planning Commission. Students may then have the option of reading their responses to the commission.

- Assign a student(s) the role of “hearing reporter.” While groups are working, the reporter(s) should float between partners/groups and take notes on the various discussions. The student(s) could then deliver a “news cast” to the class at the end of the lesson based on his/her notes.

- Assign a student(s) the role of “hearing stenographer” and create sketches of various stages of the hearing.

AIG

- Rather than have students work in partners, assign them an individual role for presenting to the Planning Commission, or have students create a roll on their own.
News Release

Public Hearing on the proposed Tar Heel City Airport

The Dogwood County Planning Commission will hold a public comment session to provide citizens with an opportunity to express their opinions on the proposed Tar Heel City Airport.

The citizen comment sessions will be held during the Dogwood Planning Commission’s regularly scheduled meeting on February 13 at 7pm in the Commissioner’s Meeting Room, 2nd floor, Dogwood County Administrative Complex, 5000 Main St.

Citizens who wish to speak must sign up outside the Commissioner’s Meeting Room prior to the meeting between 6:30pm and 7:00pm.

Citizens may also submit written comments for the Dogwood Planning Commission by addressing them to:

Wanda Jenkins
Clerk, Dogwood Planning Commission
5000 Main St.
Tar Heel, NC 25555
**Stakeholder Roles**

**Proponent Roles of Airport Construction**

**Wagner – Land Developer, Mayor of Tar Heel City**

*Age 38, married, five children in elementary and high school*

You have been very successful in bringing commercial development to Dogwood County and believe this is the only way Tar Heel City and other surrounding areas in Dogwood County will keep up with the rest of the state. Your prestige enabled you to be easily elected mayor of Tar Heel City two years ago and you are fully prepared to call in any favors or use your influence in anyway possible to get this airport constructed. You are convinced that continued growth in Dogwood County is dependent upon additional transportation facilities. You have heavily invested in the planned sports/recreation complex and believe that it would “put Dogwood County on the map,” as well as create numerous jobs for the community. Now you are actively lining up support for the airport proposal and are prepared to do whatever it takes to ensure this proposal is supported by the Planning Commission.

**Dr. Nielsen – Physician**

*Age 38, married, three children in elementary school*

You recently opened a practice in Tar Heel City, but its growth has not been as rapid as you would like considering the influx of recent business in Dogwood County. Thus, you often travel to various medical facilities giving lectures at high prices to supplement your practice’s income. You support the airport for several reasons. First, with your home just outside the city limits, about ten miles from the proposed airport, it would be convenient for you to have the air service due to your travel to various medical facilities. Also, you feel the airport would bring growth to Dogwood County, which could only positively impact your medical practice. You are fully prepared to grow with the County, and would love to see your practice become a local medical leader in research and treatment. This could help put Dogwood County in the spotlight.

**Saunders – Realtor**

*Age 52, married, one daughter in community college*

You are a realtor whose financial success is more or less dependent upon the continuing growth of Dogwood County. You moved here 10 years ago from Charlotte, having foreseen the suburban migration as a result of the crowding and congestion around the metro area. You feel that the airport would have a positive effect on property values. You are a homeowner and feel that other homeowners should be happy to have an important transportation facility so conveniently located. Citizens in every city of Dogwood County need to understand that this airport is going to make them money, and we all know, money makes the world go round!
Calhoun – Attorney for Landowners  
Age 36, unmarried, holds pilot’s license

You live in Charlotte and have been retained by the owners of the proposed airport site. You have studied the legal aspects of the case and have determined that there should be no legal obstacles to building the airport with the cooperation of county and city officials. In addition, as an expert in development, you hope to convince people at the hearing that the small airport would be beneficial to the community (not to mention that you will continued to be employed by the landowners throughout the sale process at your high hourly rate if the airport is approved!). Your livelihood, as well as the livelihood of all Dogwood County residents, is at stake here.

Jablonski – Service Station Owner  
Age 68, married

You have lived in Dogwood County your whole life, and inherited your service station when your father passed away 10 years ago. You are a good citizen of simple tastes, and you don’t pretend to know a whole lot about politics. But what you do know is with your station located at the interstate highway exit near the proposed airport site, the airport would create a good source of income for your business. In fact, you feel sure the airport would bring everyone in the County additional business. While a lot of old folks don’t like change, you are all for it. If you could double your business profit over the next years, you and your wife could actually retire a happy, well provided for couple. Surely, the same would be true for lots of other Dogwood residents.

Ives – Landowner  
Age 62, married, three children living in Dogwood County

You and your business associate, Strauss, purchased the property where the proposed airport would be built 14 years ago when the area was almost all undeveloped. Although people have inquired several times about buying the land for housing developments, you preferred to hold on to the land as its value continued to climb. Recently, you were contacted regarding the property’s availability for the proposed airport. You and Strauss would like to sell to the airport developers for a good price. Not only will you retire a rich man, but you genuinely feel the airport would be the best use of the land. An airport would generate unending revenue and jobs in the County, more so than any other way the land could be used.

Strauss – Landowner  
Age 57, married, two married children, Dogwood Board of Education Member

You and your family have lived in Blue Devil Township for over 30 years. You formerly owned a real estate company and are now semi-retired. You have used your knowledge of real estate to help the county schools obtain the best land for the money whenever property was needed to construct new schools. Although you favor selling the property to the airport developers, you admittedly are worried about the harmful effects the airport might have on the new high school whose construction you strongly advocated. You hope that the Planning Commission can come to some agreement on not only constructing the airport, but also protecting the school.
**Spofford- Restaurant Owner**  
*Age 33, single*

You recently graduated from the UNC-Chapel Hill with a graduate degree in business, then moved back to Tar Heel City and opened a restaurant. Its success was so overwhelming that you opened up a second chain in Blue Devil Township. You feel that the construction of an airport would help business owners such as yourself in expanding. Unless something, such as the proposed airport, happens here in Tar Heel, the city and surrounding areas will become stagnant. You also think it’s important to work on getting a younger generation of professionals interested in moving and living here. That is the only way to keep the County thriving. An airport would help in this matter as well.

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**West- Manager of Tar Heel Travels**  
*Age 30, single*

You have worked as the manager of the only travel agency in Tar Heel, Tar Heel Travels, for 5 years. You are hoping to one day buy the owner out and run the business as your own. You feel that the proposed airport would make your job much easier, not to mention successful. Right now, you have to book all or your clients on flights out of Charlotte. You feel if Tar Heel had its own airport in the area, the recreational travel business would boom.
Senator Todd – State Legislator

*Age 39, lawyer, married, one son in elementary school*

You have lived in Dogwood County all your life. Over the years you have been an outspoken opponent of what you felt was poorly planned commercial development around Tar Heel City. While growth is important, it is important it be done in an organized and sensible way. Otherwise the County you love will be another typical land of urban sprawl with Wal-marts on every corner and a sky full of smog. You hope to use your position as a state senator to block any effort to build an airport in the county. You feel the location being considered for the airport is inappropriate since it is close to a school and recreation fields, and would create too much traffic going in and out of Tar Heel. That said, you would perhaps be open to an airport were it built on a different site.

José – President, The Green Team

*42, single*

As the President of Dogwood County’s main environmental organization, The Green Team, you are known as a leader in environmental causes. Your organization led a successful effort to close down a mill that was polluting Lake Scuppernong two years ago. The idea that government officials are actually considering constructing an airport in your county now infuriates you. The pollution (air, ozone, water, noise, etc.) created would be endless. The negative health effects would be overwhelming, not only from the airport but from the increased traffic. You and your organization’s members passionately believe that the land should not be sold to developers; rather it should be used for a natural park and green space. The environment and health of Dogwood residents should take precedence over money. You feel it is important to point out that your organization will not support any elected official serving on the Planning Commission who supports this project for reelection.

Kyle – County Commissioner

*Age 61, widowed, 4 married daughters and 6 grandchildren, all living in Scuppernong*

You have lived in Dogwood County all your life. You own a large farm between Tar Heel City and Blue Devil Township which is run by one of your son-in-laws. You ran for the Board of County Commissioners two years ago because you were concerned about the urbanization and morale decline of your county. You have seen the local population explosion and feel that the county does not need any more people or industry. You believe that nothing is gained by turning good farmland into commercial property. Things are just fine the way they are, and have been since you are a kid. You think everyone should “leave well-enough alone”!
Allen – Insurance Salesperson
Age 37, married, two children in elementary school

You are an insurance salesman who has done very well in recent years by concentrating in the area of property insurance. You are concerned about the effects that the airport would have on property values, especially since your company insures the apartment complex across the road from the proposed site. You own a $200,000 home near the site under consideration as well. While some may say an airport will increase property value, you feel all it will do is lower the value of any home within 15 miles of the airport. No one wants a home with planes flying over head and traffic zooming through at all hours of the night. This airport would thus negatively affect anyone in the real estate business, insurance business, construction business, as well as homeowners in the area. Thousands of citizen’s number one investment will be ruined if this airport is approved.

Vittorio – Apartment Tenant
Age 25, unmarried, one child in elementary school

You are an accountant in a local business firm and have lived in Dogwood County for five years. You represent a group of concerned residents from the apartment complex across the road from the proposed site. You and your neighbors are worried about the potential dangers that might exist from low-flying planes and pollution. You all also feel that airport’s construction would bring traffic congestion to the area, as well as loud noise all hours of the day and night. With 150 residents of all ages living in the complex, you feel it would be a complete disregard of each of the individual citizens you represent if this airport is approved.

Michaels – Home Owner
Age 62, widowed, no children

You are living in a subdivision located near the proposed site. You have spent the last two months trying to organize other homeowners to fight against the airport plan and have a petition with 1,500 signatures against the airport’s construction in Tar Heel. You are concerned that the airport will bring traffic congestion to the neighborhood as well as air and noise pollution. You and those living in surrounding neighborhoods also feel sure your property values will lower drastically.

Mahler – Apartment Owner
Age 51, widowed, three children in college, Chamber of Commerce member

You live in and own the apartment complex across the road from the proposed airport site. You object to its proposed location so near to your complex. You believe that your property will be devalued and that your apartments might be less desirable to potential tenants. Last year, you had attempted and failed to purchase some of the property in question. You had hoped to expand your complex across the road.
Caldwell – Mayor of Blue Devil Township
Age 45, married, two daughters in high school

You and your spouse operate a hardware store in Blue Devil Township. Both of you are strongly opposed to the airport. You know that Blue Devil Township residents would have their taxes sharply increased if the county commissioners go ahead with the airport plan. Yet, few Blue Devil Township citizens would make a half-hour drive to the airport to take the short flight to Charlotte. A few years ago, you and your spouse fought a losing battle against the closing of Blue Devil Township High School and the construction of the new county high school on the other side of Tar Heel City.

Weber – Campground owner
Age 29, unmarried, Dogwood County Democratic Committee member

You operate a campground on Lake Scuppernong. You have recently invested heavily to expand your facilities to take advantage of the recreation vehicle traffic on the nearby interstate highway. You are convinced that it would be a mistake for the county to run an airport. You have studied the proposal and have determined that in order to have an airport capable of having regular commuter air service, the county would have to spend so much money that taxes would be greatly increased. You have decided to make this a political issue and plan to run in this year’s election for a seat on the county commission.

Hines – Professional Planner
Age 27, married, 1 son in elementary school, Junior Chamber of Commerce member

You work for the Regional Development Commission and have been helping to develop a land-use plan for Dogwood and five other surrounding counties. You recently moved to the area and have bought a home in Blue Devil Township. Your analysis of the situation has led you to conclude that Dogwood County alone could not support the kind of airport proposed. At the meeting, you plan to point out that federal government standards – including requirements for radar if there is to be regularly scheduled air service – could not be met with the relatively small amount of money being suggested by the airport’s proponents. You want to urge Dogwood to join in a cooperative venture with neighboring counties to construct a regional airport in an alternate location to serve a wider area.
Planning Commission Roles
(Undecided)

Jones – Chairman of the Planning Commission

Age 36, divorced, no children

You are a civil engineer formerly employed by the Environmental Protection Agency as an investigator of waste disposal sites in the southeast. You now work for a surveying company based in Tar Heel City. You have concerns about the environmental impact of the proposed airport, but are still undecided.

As the Chair of the Planning Commission, you will be responsible for leading the hearing today. With assistance from your teacher, you will:

1. Begin the meeting when told to do so:
   - Call the meeting to order, welcome everyone, and summarize the purpose of the hearing.
   - Explain that you will call presenting citizens up by name, starting with a citizen from the Proponent side, followed by an Opponent, and so on until all citizens have spoken (Ask your teacher for the list of names to call up.)
   - Remind citizens that they may be questioned by the Commission after their two minute presentation
2. As you call up the citizen presenters, thank them when they have finished and open the floor for 1-2 questions from the Commission (you can also ask a question if you’d like).
3. After all proponents and opponents have presented their two minute speeches, call for a five minute break:
   - Your teacher will remind proponents and opponents to divide into groups to discuss and prepare a three minute closing statement.
   - During the break, group up with your fellow Commission members and ask them which side their opinion is currently leaning towards regarding the airport proposal.
4. After the five minutes, your teacher will instruct you to reconvene the hearing. You will:
   - Welcome all citizens back, calling for the Proponent closing statement and the Opponent closing statement.
   - Allow Commission members to ask any lingering questions.
5. Finally, close the public comment session of the hearing and lead the Commission in an open deliberation of how to report on the proposed airport to the Board of County Commissioners.

Alden – County Commissioner

Age 56, married, no children, Chamber of Commerce member

You are now serving in your final year as Chair of Dogwood County’s Board of County Commissioners. This is a full-time elected position for which you plan to run again. It is important for you to know the likes and dislikes of the voters. You feel that if the county is to continue to progress, there will have to be more business and industrial development. You are the part-owner of a farm supply company in Blue Devil Township. As you and your spouse also live in Blue Devil Township, you will not be personally affected by the proposed airport. However, you plan to make your decision based on the overall consensus of the citizens you hear from, since that is who will be voting or not voting for you.
Goldmark – Plant Manager  
*Age 34, divorced, one child, Junior Chamber of Commerce member*

You moved to Dogwood County only five years ago to become manager of a manufacturing plant. You immediately became active in community affairs. You worked hard helping develop the city/county recreation department and continue to work in the recreation program. You favor putting tighter controls on land development in the county. You feel that Alden is a weak County Commissioner Chair, and you have recently announced that you are going to run against Alden in the upcoming election. Thus, chances are whatever Alden supports, you will take the opposite view.

Dr. Delius – Pediatrician  
*Age 38, unmarried, Dogwood County Republican Executive Committee member*

You have been Dogwood County’s only pediatrician since returning here four years ago. Your father, recently retired after 20 years as tax commissioner, has told you that the airport will be a heavy burden on the county’s financial resources. But your friends in the business community are counting on your support for the airport proposal. As a doctor, you worry about the increased air pollution an airport might bring. Your best friend has a daughter who suffers from asthma, and you understand what a serious issue air quality can be for this life threatening condition.

Dr. Mann – School Superintendent  
*Age 44, married, one daughter attending community college, Rotary Club member*

You were appointed as superintendent last year after having served as high school principal for five years. You and your spouse are part owners of a conference hotel and restaurant located in Tar Heel City. An airport would certainly increase your business. However, as Superintendent, parents have been speaking to you regarding their concern about planes flying over the high school and about increased traffic on School Road. Many have asked you to speak out against the airport. So far you have adopted a wait and see attitude.

Staley – Director of the City/County Recreation Department  
*Age 39, unmarried, NC Nature Conservancy member*

You have, over the last five years, developed the joint city/county recreation program into a model that has been publicized throughout the state. Although, as a sports enthusiast, you like the idea of a well-developed sports/recreation complex being constructed on Lake Scuppernong, you are concerned about the possible environmental damage that might result if the airport is built. Also, you are annoyed that the businessmen who had asked your advice on the sports complex neglected to inform you that the proposed airport would border on the recreation department’s playing fields and swimming pool. That said, it has been a dream of yours that Tar Heel City could form a professional baseball team, and an airport would surely make it easy for such a team to travel to games across the states.
Rev. Bartlett – Minister
Age 41, married, six children, Dogwood County Board of Education member

You are concerned about the location of the airport adjacent to the site of your church. Several members of your congregation have pointed out that the planes would be flying in and out during Sunday services. Your congregation as a whole expects that you will oppose the construction. However, as a school board member, you are aware that the airport might stimulate the county’s economy, thus bringing in needed school revenue. One of your daughters attends the high school and is organizing student support of the airport. Many young people feel that the airport will lead to more development, thus more entertainment and jobs for teens.

Stanton – Lawyer
Age 42, married, member of Pride of Tar Heel, a group for promoting business growth

You have been a strong advocate for promoting business growth in Tar Heel. Your fellow members of the Pride of Tar Heel strongly support the airport’s construction, and expect you to do anything in your power to advocate for it. However, your mother lives in a home that is 4 miles from the proposed airport’s site. She has made it clear that if you support it, she will never forgive you.
Participating in Local Government ~ Homework

1. What are the responsibilities of the Board of County Commissioners?

2. What is the role of commissions (also called boards or committees) such as the Planning Commission?

3. In what ways can citizens be informed about issues occurring in their local communities?

4. What is the purpose of a public hearing?

5. Why is it important to be informed of the decisions your local governments are making?

6. What are various ways you can participate in your local government?

7. Why is it important to participate in local government?

8. Imagine your best friend is planning to present at a local government hearing. What advise would you give him/her on how to be taken seriously and make an effective presentation?