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Lindemann's campaign opponents: DUI arrest is off-limits

By Matt Garfield · [mgarfield@heraldonline.com](mailto:mgarfield@heraldonline.com)

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FORT MILL -- Embattled York County Councilman Paul Lindemann hopes his recent arrest on drunken driving charges won't overshadow the fall campaign. His two opponents feel the same way.

Democrat Marion Davenport said this week she will avoid bringing up Lindemann's legal troubles as she seeks to unseat him in council District 1. Voters can make their own judgments, she said. They just won't come from her.

"Those are issues that he has to deal with, but I don't know that they're political issues," she told The Herald. "It's not that I don't think it has a bearing on the race. I'm sort of against kicking people when they're down. It's not the nice thing to do."

Lindemann, a Republican, said Wednesday that he appreciates Davenport's pledge and feels confident defending his conservative record.

The contrast of candidates could hardly be more striking.

Lindemann is a 29-year-old real estate investor nicknamed "Hollywood" by a fellow council member for his nice suits and well-coifed hair. Davenport is a 65-year-old grandmother of four who wears a monogrammed apron adorned with a squirrel holding a sign that says "Will Work For Seed."

At the Chirp n' Chatter store off Gold Hill Road, Davenport sells bird feeders, fountains and garden ornaments, along with 20-pound bags of deer chow and other animal food.

### **Race could be tight**

The contest figured to be competitive even before Lindemann was arrested two weeks ago in Columbia on charges of driving under the influence. Now, the normal dynamics have been thrown into disarray.

Some Republicans are calling for Lindemann's resignation and urging him to get help for his personal troubles. Lindemann has vowed to continue with the help of his supporters and family.

Given the discord, Davenport doesn't need to get involved, a political expert says.

"If other people are doing it for you, you don't need to do it for yourself and you can take the high road," said Scott Huffmon, a political scientist at Winthrop University. "Most of the damage seems to have been done."

A similar response came from Green Party candidate Bryan Smith of Fort Mill, a 46-year-old veterinary technician.

"I don't know that I'd really use that as something to hit him over the head with," said Smith, whose platform calls for expanded recycling programs and stricter growth policies.

### **Focus on the environment**

In northern York County's conservative, suburban-minded neighborhoods, Davenport hopes to make inroads as a self-described fiscal conservative who cares about the environment. She wants developers to stop cutting down so many trees.

She calls for protecting the Catawba River in terms of its scenic beauty and importance to the water supply.

"I'm not a tree hugger, but certainly an environmentalist," she said.

Lindemann defended York County's efforts to promote conservation, pointing to new buffer zone rules on Lake Wylie and tighter stormwater controls on housing developments.

If she would look outside Fort Mill, "she'd probably see that we're already doing what she's talking about," he said. "We have done over and above our call to duty."

Despite the tumult of the past two weeks, candidates say they want to carry on a civil, positive debate through the Nov. 4 election.

Matt Garfield &#8226; 329-4063

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