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Three candidates seek nomination for Dist. 4 seat

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BY TAYLOR HEEDEN, News + Record Staff

Chatham Democrats will choose between three candidates to represent the party in the Chatham County District 4 commissioner race on November's ballot.

Albert Reddick, Katie Kenlan and Travis Patterson are heading into the 17-day long early voting period, starting on April 28, and ending with the May 17 primary. The primary's winner will face Republican Joseph Godfrey for the Dist. 4 seat, which is currently held by Robert Logan. Logan was appointed to finish Jim Crawford's term after Crawford resigned from his seat due to health reasons in December.

Albert Reddick: Rev. Albert Reddick lives in Siler City, where he has served as a pastor and as the site manager at Windsor Arms Apartments.

Reddick has previously run for elected office in prior Siler City mayoral races, but decided to run in the commissioners' race after observing that board's work.

“It is this commitment of our community, each other, all people, races and genders that has inspired me to seek to become your next commissioner,” Reddick said.

Reddick wants commissioners to establish policies increasing the amount of affordable housing in the county, bring in businesses and jobs to benefit the local economy and work toward solutions for cleaner water and land preservation.

Reddick also said he wants commissioners to look at growth in Chatham and see what resources the community needs to flourish.

“It is not if we grow, but rather how we grow,” he said. “The location, affordability and splendor of Chatham County are too enticing for growth not to occur — it will be the challenging responsibility of the county commissioners to develop a plan for growth that schedules the pace of growth.”

To address these challenges, Reddick said it was crucial for commissioners to continue updating the future land use plan — known as the Comprehensive Development Plan — to have a guide for future development proposals.

“The Comprehensive Development Plan is like a road map that guides us in our present and future development,” he said. “It was developed with the input of Chatham County citizens, so I think there is general agreement that is a good guide for us to follow.”

Katie Kenlan: Kenlan resides in Pittsboro and is the daughter of Elaine Chiosso, the executive director of the Haw River Assembly.

One of Kenlan’s main concerns surrounds climate change and its impact on the county’s environment. As commissioner, she said she would place emphasis on environmental protections as Chatham County continues to experience unprecedented growth.

“We need to address the issues of climate change to protect our children and grandchildren and understand and prepare for the impacts ahead,” Kenlan said.

A challenge Kenlan has direct experience with is the polluting of the Haw River, which has impacted Pittsboro’s drinking water supply for decades. She said she wants to develop solutions for cleaner drinking water for Chatham County residents, especially those affected by repeated PFAS and 1,4-Dioxane discharges.

“(We need) a stronger county role in working to stop the pollution degrading our rivers and streams, including the industrial ‘forever’ chemicals in the Haw River, contaminating the water supply of Pittsboro, coming from upriver counties,” she said. “(We need to) ensure adequate and safe drinking water for all residents of the county and wastewater systems that do not create new sources of pollution.”

Kenlan said her experience as a bilingual, lifelong Chatham resident provides her with a unique skill set she claims distinguishes her from the other candidates on the ballot.

“Being bilingual, with wide and varied life experiences, gives me skills and knowledge to work with people of diverse backgrounds and increase opportunities and equity, especially for youth,” she said. “I understand the critical issues of water quality, wastewater, smart growth, climate

impacts, education and rural life, and will work to find the best solutions.”

Travis Patterson: Patterson is the owner and CEO of Self-Enhancing Education and Development Services, the program coordinator for the Juvenile Community Service and Restitution Program at Communities In Schools of Chatham County, as well as the supervisor at Family Visitation Services of Chatham County.

He said he wants to contribute more to his county not only by serving as a commissioner, but also by being a voice he feels is not often represented in local government.

“I aspire to be a voice, an advocate and an inspiration to others,” Patterson said. “My work in the community reflects my commitment to Chatham County, and I feel that it is important that the communities and people I serve have representation.”

As a commissioner, Patterson wants to prioritize water quality and housing availability within the county as Chatham continues to develop.

“I would work to try to bridge the gap between West Chatham and East Chatham, and focus on increasing housing opportunities for our residents,” he said. “We are a rural community and many residents are concerned that incoming projects will disrupt our way of life. We need to ensure that this does not happen.”

Patterson’s community service — ranging from volunteer work to his paid professions — sets him apart from the other candidates, he said. By keeping up with local issues and working to address them in his day-to-day job, Patterson said he is ready to take the steps to become an elected official representing “the best interest of the county.”

“I have a comprehensive understanding of the county’s resources and would use my knowledge to advance the mission of our leadership,” he said. “I have worked to serve Chatham County for numerous years, and in several capacities, my experience as a community worker, as a volunteer and as a leader is what separates me from other candidates.”

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