

# Councilman says he's innocent of all charges

By **Maria McCain**

THE PRESS-SCOUT

A Coachella city councilman, arraigned in Riverside County Superior Court in Indio, pleaded not guilty Thursday to misdemeanor counts of domestic violence, child endangerment and possession of marijuana.

On Nov. 18, Eduardo H. Garcia Jr. of Coachella allegedly hit his wife, Lorena DeLeon, according to a complaint filed by prosecutors Thursday.

The complaint also alleged that the incident occurred in front of the couple's child, which led to the child endangerment charge.

And as Garcia was being processed into the jail that same day, deputies allegedly found about



**Garcia:** Coachella city councilman pleads innocent to misdemeanor charges.

Sal Velazquez, a longtime Coachella resident, said Thursday that he does not believe this incident negatively impacts Garcia's position as a council member.

28.5 grams of marijuana on him.

The 28-year-old councilman, who has declined to comment on the incident, is free on \$50,000 bail.

He is scheduled to appear again in court on Jan. 5 for a preliminary hearing.

## COACHELLA

"I voted for him the first time, and I'd vote for him again," Velazquez said. "Everybody's human. Everybody makes mistakes. He's fairly young as a council member and maybe he has learned a lesson from all this."

Garcia, an adult education teacher, completed his first year on the council in November.

Initially, he was arrested on a felony count of domestic violence. However, prosecutors have changed that charge to a misdemeanor.

The lesser charge means Garcia's council seat is not in danger, officials said.

He is the second council member to be charged with a crime this year.

In March, Councilman Gilbert Ramirez was arrested after getting into a fight with a female sheriff's deputy over the towing of a truck.

In October, he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of resisting arrest.

He was sentenced to three years of probation and ordered to undergo anger management training.

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