

November 2020



The Castle Hills Reporter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Message from the Mayor.....p.2-3
City Managerp.4
City Council Comments p.5-8

Code Compliance..... p.9
Castle Hills Fire Department p.10
Police Department News..... p.11

A bi-monthly newsletter for the residents of the City of Castle Hills published by Neighborhood News, Inc.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Friends,

By the time that this Reporter reaches you, we will be preparing for the holidays. Albeit different, it is still an opportunity for us to gather with our family as we approach the new year. While I have a great deal of amazing news to share, I want to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to continue to be mindful of COVID-19. The majority of the expert reports tend to believe that we will see another spike toward the holidays. Naturally the cold weather months lend themselves to more illnesses, largely in part because we tend to spend more time indoors. The advice remains the same: social distance, wash your hands, and do your best to avoid high exposure areas. A personal tidbit that I would like to add is to keep extra essentials on hand. I pray that we don't go back to the long lines that we saw once before, but if 2020 has shown us one thing, it is that anything is possible.

Streets and Drainage:

As long as I have been around Castle Hills, I have continually heard "streets and drainage are our number one concern." I'm proud to share that this Council heard you loud and clear and we have BIG PLANS in place for the next 12 months. In August we voted to borrow money--from what I am told, this is the first time in the City's history that we have borrowed money for infrastructure. What does this mean? You have heard me talk about "paying as we go." For the longest time, Castle Hills has not been doing necessary street maintenance to extend the useful life of our streets. Instead, we were saving all of our money to do one big street project. The big project is great, but as we do one project, other projects fall further into disrepair, to the point that they are no longer affordable maintenance, but require full replacement.

What are the terms?

It is important to share some of the critical details of this deal. Much like individual credit scores, Cities have credit ratings. Similar to the credit scores, there are a wide array of variables that affect a City's credit worthiness. Before we accepted proposals, we received a credit analyzation to determine where we as a City stand. Standard and Poor's rated the City of Castle Hills at "AA" rating which is exceptional! I am beyond proud of our City and most importantly our City staff, at the direction of City Manager Rapelye. Like credit scores, a credit rating is a comprehensive overview that is ultimately a culmination of multiple years of work. The report specifically attributed the management of the City to our excellent rating. The "AA" credit rating earned Castle Hills an interest rate of 1.49%!

What's the plan?

One of the best things that Mr. Rapelye did was put together a comprehensive CIP, or Capital

(Continued on page 3)

CITY COUNCIL

JR Trevino
Mayor

Joe Izbrand
Mayor Pro-Tem, Place 1

Frank Paul
Place 2

Kurt May
Place 3

Jack Joyce
Place 4

Douglas Gregory
Place 5

CITY STAFF

Ryan Rapelye
City Manager, (210) 293-9673

Brenda Craig
Interim City Secretary,
(210) 293-9681

Lara Feagins
Finance, (210) 293-9674

James "Jim" Ladewig
Fire Department Chief
(210) 342-2341, ext. 217

Johnny Siemens
Police Department Chief
(210) 342-2341

Rick Harada
Public Works & Animal Control
Department Director
(210) 293-9676

ALL EMERGENCIES, EMT, FIRE & POLICE CALL 911

Non-emergency (210) 342-2341

Monthly Meetings

All meetings are held at
City Hall unless otherwise posted.

City Council
2nd Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Architectural Review Committee
1st Wednesday, 7:00pm
Upon Request

Board of Adjustment
4th Monday, 5:30 p.m.
Upon Request

Zoning Commission
1st Tuesday, 7:00pm
Upon Request

**Crime Control & Prevention
District**
3rd Monday, 5:30pm
Quarterly or as needed

E. L. Smith Plumbing



www.elsmith.com
210-736-1605

Housekeeper Available

- Reliable & Thorough
- General Housekeeping Services

210-422-3979

Ask for Elsa

Habla Español

(Continued from page 2)

Improvement Plan. This plan was instrumental in our excellent credit rating. It shows our creditors that we have a systematic plan on how to approach our projects. Ordinarily, you would only use borrowed money to finance projects that have a long useful life. For example, you might finance a car but you wouldn't finance an oil change. Your car would likely need another oil change before you finish paying for the first one. Mr. Rapelye has suggested that we "reimburse" the Banyan drainage project to take money and put it toward more street maintenance. This is a BRILLIANT idea that will allow us to do essential maintenance to 20 streets. Aside from the maintenance, we will be repair 10 streets and complete 3 drainage projects. Ideally, we can get one or more contractors to bid on multiple portions of the work as another opportunity to get more value for our dollars. By getting the same contractor to bid on more than one project we can potentially avoid some of the ancillary fees that contractors charge to setup on a jobsite.

Castle Hills Small Business Reinvestment Program:

In a prior article I mentioned the Castle Hills Small Business Reinvestment Program. As you may remember, the City received almost \$240,000 in Federal CARES Act funding. We carved out \$54,000 to provide to small businesses that were impacted by COVID-19. Aside from the work of staff compiling the application they also had to authenticate all the paperwork that small business applicants provided. Bexar County provided a great deal of guidance for us in this process. For example, businesses had to demonstrate a 15% loss in service, could not have received CARES Act funding from Bexar County, and nonprofits were limited to 10% of the total amount available.

At the beginning of October, Councilmembers hand delivered checks to each business owner that qualified for the microgrants. All qualified submissions received a check! My colleagues on the City Council can attest to how fulfilling it was to give these checks out. It is our hope that the microgrants will provide much needed relief for our struggling small businesses that provide amazing goods and services to not only the Castle Hills Community but the entire San Antonio metroplex. Below are a couple pictures from when we presented the checks.



NW Military Drive Street Cleanup:

I'd like to personally thank the resident who reached out to Mayor Pro-Tem Izbrand and suggested a street clean up. From there the Castle Hills Community Organization jumped into action and before we knew it, we had a day planned! I had never realized just how much trash accumulates on the easements, streets, and sidewalks. Armed with our trash bags and facemasks, about 15 volunteers walked NW Military Saturday October 17th at 11 AM. By 1 PM we had cleaned from 410 up to the intersection of NW



Military and Lockhill Selma! This quick little community project instantly gave one of our most active corridors a small facelift! A BIG Thank You to everyone who came out to help! It is my hope that we can do these cleanups quarterly in various parts of the City to ensure Castle Hills looks amazing. Thank you to all volunteers!

I pray that you and your families have a safe and healthy holiday season. As always, if I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Yours in service,

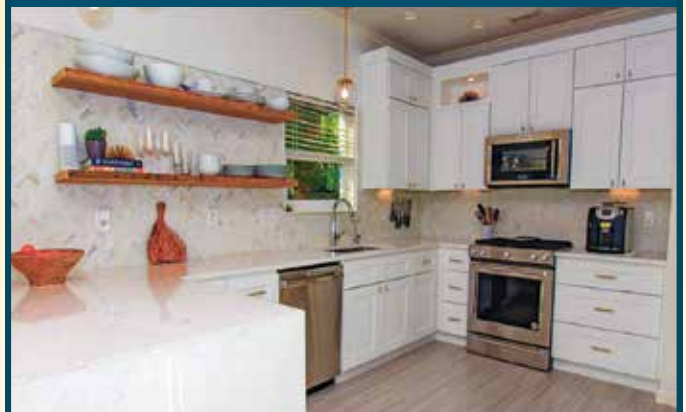
JR Treviño

Mayor

JTrevino@CastleHills-TX.gov

210-559-5940

Free Estimates & 100% Financing!



Design • Bathrooms • Kitchens • Painting • Custom Cabinets

**Our family has been remodeling
San Antonio for over 20 years!**

Come See Our Newly Designed Showroom!



**SHAW
COMPANY
REMODELING**

ShawCoRemodeling.com

210-366-2380

11943 Starcrest Drive
San Antonio, TX 78247



MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

By Ryan D. Rapelye, City Manager

FY 2021 Budget Overview, City Projects and Activities!

The FY 2021 Budget was adopted on September 15, 2020, and FY 2021 will commence on January 1, 2021. The adopted budget included projected revenues, allocation of operational funds necessary to provide quality services to our residents, and recommended capital projects necessary to maintain the current and future needs of the City. The FY 2021 Budget maintains current operating levels and represents the expected revenues and planned expenditures for the City of Castle Hills' fiscal year from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021. This adopted budget is balanced and seeks to create a roadmap for success by continuing to build on a solid foundation.

As we programmed the necessary allocation of revenue and expenses, I would be remiss not to highlight the impact and challenges of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic which has become a worldwide health event, requiring disruptive changes to all aspects of our lives. The City of Castle Hills' official response to COVID-19 began in March when the Mayor declared a public health emergency and we closed our City facilities to the public for several months. The economic impact of the pandemic to the City has been manageable thus far and current sales tax seems to be at or slightly below our targeted projections for FY 2020. In planning the FY 2021 Budget, we took a conservative approach to estimating revenues, being sensitive to fluctuations in the economy, such as sales tax and permits.

City staff continues to monitor revenue and expenditures within our FY 2020 Budget as a result of the current public health emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential impact it may have on current and future City operations. In preparation of the FY 2021 Budget, we are hoping the City will have very minimal challenges due to the current pandemic. I believe the City has done a great job to ensure that City services are moving forward.

Obviously, this year has been unlike anything we have ever dealt with in prior years, and the budget process has been different from a "typical" year; regardless, we have continued to focus on city services and resources in the adopted budget. As we move forward, I continue to be impressed with our staff and the organization's ability to proceed in a progressive manner despite the challenges we face during this ever-changing time.

As City Manager, my goal continues to be that of ensuring that the City staff is focused on customer service and effectively carrying out our City services. In developing any annual budget, we don't want to lose focus of the delivery of City services, our responsiveness and the overall impact to customer service. Also, our reserves will continue to be maintained at adequate levels, which should protect the City from future uncertainties. Total revenues for the FY2021 adopted budget are \$6,911,949. Sales and property taxes make up \$4,767,099 of total revenues. Other major revenue sources include municipal court, permits/inspections, franchise fees and sanitation fees.

Total expenses for the FY2021 Adopted Budget are \$6,911,949. The ending total reserve fund balance for the City in FY2021 is \$3.4 million, which is roughly six months - the recommended amount - of operational expenses. As is the case with most municipalities, personnel/payroll costs make up the largest single expense in a budget. The City's largest expense category is City Services, which consists of Public Safety (Police, Fire and Dispatch), Public Works - Street Maintenance and Sanitation Municipal Court and Administration.

The City Council issued Certificates of Obligation (CO) this year, and as a result the adopted budget includes the debt payment for that portion of the CO for street projects only. In the adopted FY 2021 budget, a number of capital projects have been identified: drainage project to address issues at the Carolwood and Banyan intersection; the Mimosa/Krameria to West Avenue Drainage project (Watershed II) which has been engineered and will soon go out for bids; and the city will continue to address annual street maintenance. This budget seeks to balance the demand for quality services with the ever-increasing cost to deliver those services.

The City of Castle Hills has completed two major capital projects in the last eighteen months, the Antler Roadway Project and the Banyan/Glentower Project. Our current FY 2020 Adopted Budget included funds to address micro surfacing of streets. The City recently issued certificates of obligation to address streets and drainage. This will involve over \$3 million in new street construction for some of the worst streets in Castle Hills based on the pavement index. We will also be addressing a number of large drainage projects on Banyan and Carolwood and reconstruction of the drainage channel between Mimosa to West Avenue. The City will be building out a link on the website to be able to track these upcoming projects. This will provide an illustration and description of the streets and drainage projects. We will also be coordinating with SAWS on the installation of utility lines with the proposed street reconstruction.

Recently, the City made improvements to the drainage channel at Atwater. The channel has been concreted for improved stormwater conveyance and reduces the need for continual maintenance by our Public Works Department. The City is also close to completing the redesign of our City's website that will launch in early December. The City is also improving its social media platform for better communication with our residents.

Earlier this year, the City entered into an interlocal agreement with Bexar County for appropriation of funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 to facilitate protective measures for and recovery from the public health emergency in areas affected by COVID-19, which are Presidentially-declared major disaster areas under Title IV of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. Through this Grant Agreement, Bexar County provided a mechanism for suburban cities located in Bexar County to seek reimbursement for certain COVID-19 expenses and expenditures. Under this grant, the City of Castle Hills received \$245,905. City staff developed a budget with categories for reimbursement. The categories involved the purchase of personnel protection equipment/supplies, personnel/payroll, facility cleaning services, equipment, building renovations and grants to provide economic support to local businesses.

The City was able to purchase an extractor and a Cascade System for refilling self-contained breathing apparatuses for the City's Fire Department. Previously, our firefighters were visiting other local fire stations to clean their bunker gear and refill the apparatuses. Due to the fact that fire stations are high risk COVID areas, and based upon documented incidents of COVID positive fire personnel exposing other individuals, it is imperative to limit exposing our firefighters to further COVID risks. The installation of the extractor/dryer and the Cascade System will minimize exposing our personnel, as well as neighboring personnel, to each other.

Also, as part of the CARES Act budget the city allocated funds for building renovations at the Fire Department in order to modify the sleeping quarters and meet the requirements of isolation and distancing of firefighters to prevent the spread of COVID. Currently, the on-duty firefighters sleep in one large room, all sharing the same space and ventilation system. The construction of walls and installation of doors will create individual rooms in the firefighters' quarters. This will protect firefighters from exposure and possible spread of COVID. Individual rooms and/or quarters will make it easier to disinfect areas and isolate firefighters should an outbreak occur. These expenditures in the Fire Department were identified as necessary and ultimately would have been expensed out of the City's General Fund operations if it had not been available through the CARES Act.

In Closing, I would like to say thank you to all our employees during this budget process and appreciate all they do for the City and our organization on a daily basis. I would like to take the time with this article and spotlight one in particular, our Public Works Director, Rick Harada. Rick and his team work diligently to ensure sanitation is collected twice a week, includes recycle and brush frequencies, animal control, abatement of rights-of-way, facility maintenance, street maintenance and a long list of other projects around the City. Recently, Mr. Harada worked attentively on the development and build out of the Plexiglas dividers on the City Council Dais to protect our elected officials and board members at City public meetings. Mr. Harada worked on this project in between other projects throughout the week and even weekends to construct and install the protective safety partitions during this public health emergency. I appreciate Mr. Harada's institutional knowledge of over 20 years and his leadership in our City's Public Works Department.

Please contact me at rrapelye@castlehills-tx.gov or at the office at 210.293.9673 if you have any questions on projects or need assistance with services from the City of Castle Hills.



COUNCIL COMMENTS



JOE IZBRAND

PLACE 1
Mayor Pro-Tem

Dear Neighbors,

As we welcome the holiday season and come to the end of the year, there probably won't be many of us who will be sorry to say goodbye to the unpredictable and challenging year of 2020. Yet, despite the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, there are many reasons to look back on this time with a feeling of accomplishment in Castle Hills.

This was the year we pulled together and became a stronger and more resilient community.

When the pandemic broke out, residents rallied to help their at-risk neighbors who could not venture from home for such basic activities as grocery shopping or picking up medical prescriptions. Neighbors called neighbors to check-in on each other. Old friendships were restored and new friendships were created.

In addition, the Castle Hills Community Organization and the

Castle Hills Woman's Club partnered to organize a broader community effort to shop for and support our elderly residents. And, the Castle Hills Police Department began an expanded program to check on the welfare of our most vulnerable who are sheltering at home.

The City Council initiated programs to provide free face masks to Castle Hills small business owners for their customers. The City provided grants to small businesses to help them recover from the financial losses caused by the pandemic.

Our Fire Department and Police Department took on roles of not just protecting our community but also serving as our ambassadors for children whose planned birthday celebrations had been upended. The site of fire trucks and police cars appearing in front of homes, with their flashing lights and loudspeakers offering birthday wishes, lifted the spirits of children and adults, alike.

Looking back on 2020, in my first full year as your Place 1 Alderman, this has been a time of unprecedented accomplishment and collaboration by your city council:

- We approved a balanced budget that funds all of our needs despite the current economic uncertainty;
- We passed an independent audit of our finances with flying colors;
- We approved comprehensive revisions to the city's zoning ordinance to protect our neighborhoods;
- We put in place good governance procedures including restructuring the way appointments are made to boards and commissions to better ensure fair community representation, which included the development of an application process;
- We secured safety equipment and facilities improvements for the

(Continued on page 6)



 **CommuniCare**

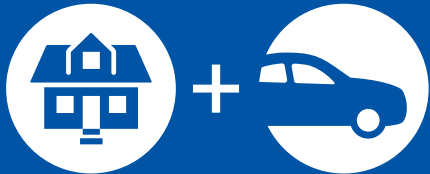
Get Well, Stay Well!

PEDIATRICS • FAMILY MEDICINE
WOMEN'S HEALTH
DENTAL • BEHAVIORAL HEALTH


📍 SAN ANTONIO, BOERNE, & HELOTES
BOOK ONLINE AT
COMMUNICARES.AORG

ACCEPTING MOST PRIVATE INSURANCES
MEDICAID/CHIP, MEDICARE, AND SELF-PAY PATIENTS.


Bundle up for savings



When you choose Allstate to protect what matters most, you get expert agents who will make it easy for you to save. Like with bundling your insurance. It's the simplest way for you to save time and money, while getting protection for the things that matter most. Stop by or call today and let's get you bundled up.

 **David Pfau Insurance**
210-257-0117
2211 NW Military Hwy.
Castle Hills
davidpfau@allstate.com

Call or stop by to see
how much you can save.


Allstate
You're in good hands.

Subject to terms, conditions & availability. Savings vary. Allstate Vehicle and Property Insurance Co., Allstate Fire and Casualty Insurance Co. © 2018 Allstate Insurance Co.

(Continued from page 5)

- Castle Hills Fire Department that had been needed for years;
- We created positive new relationships with regional and state officials and agencies to look out for the best interests of Castle Hills;
 - We secured \$8.25 million in certificates of obligation to accelerate street and drainage improvements;
 - We launched major capital improvement projects including phase I of the Glentower/Banyan street and drainage project and the reconstruction of Antler Drive; and
 - We completed resurfacing of numerous streets across the city as part of the street maintenance program.

Yes, 2020 has been a tough year. Yet, at the same time, we have accomplished a great deal in Castle Hills because of our determination to work together in a spirit of cooperation to move our city forward.

Much more is yet to come.

As we celebrate the holiday season, I wish you and your loved ones the best very of health and happiness, and optimism for the new year.

I am tremendously honored to serve as your Place 1 Alderman, and invite you to stay in touch. Let me know how I can be of service by connecting with me at www.facebook.com/IzbrandPlace1. You can also share your thoughts, ideas and comments with me via email at IzbrandPlace1@gmail.com.

Thank you for the privilege of serving our community.

Happy Holidays!



SERVICE FIRST
A/C & Plumbing
210-521-1500

Servicing San Antonio and surrounding areas for over 20 years.

24/7 Emergency Service Available

- ✓ Affordable & Dependable Estimates
- ✓ Affordable Preventative Maintenance Plans
- ✓ AC Financing & Installation Loans
- ✓ Service Warranties

FAST RESPONSE!

www.servicefirstactx.com

\$500 OFF
New A/C Equipment
Must mention this ad.
Not valid with other offers.
Expires 11/30/20

20% OFF
All Repairs (A/C & Plumbing)
Must mention this ad.
Not valid with other offers.
Expires 11/30/20



FRANK PAUL
PLACE 2

As I mentioned in the last Reporter, I want the citizens of our city to know about Castle Hills Happening other than just council news. Many are volunteering to help make Castle Hills the best small city in the area. Last month Patsy Martin, the President of the Garden Club spoke about their activities. This month I have asked the Chair of the Parks and Projects commission to speak about what they are about.

Thank you, Frank, for allowing me to talk about the Parks and Projects Commission. The Commission was formally established by Ordinance 2020-02-11-A and was effective May 1, 2020. The Commission was formed by combining the Parks Commission and the Ad Hoc Project Committee. Our duties include preparing a parks inventory and a plan for future parks and exploring park and city-wide projects that benefit the wellbeing and economic development of the City.

The Commission is made up of five members, appointed by each alderman and an alternate appointed by the Mayor. Each member serves a 2-year term. Current members are Bonnie Hopke (Chair), John Squire (Vice Chair), Ray Schultz, Skip McCormick, Bernard Juettemeyer, and Rick Lopez (Alternate). Alderman Jack Joyce serves as the Council Liaison and, of course, Mr. Rapelye supports and assists on behalf of the City.

The Commission is working on five initiatives:

1. The Parks Plan & Inventory, which was approved by the Commission on June 20, 2020 and recommended to City Council. We are now evaluating the concepts of linear parks and vegetated drainage channels.
2. Working with NEISD to open the playgrounds, track, and sports courts at Castle Hills Elementary and Jackson-Keller Elementary for use by the residents. With the schools closed, the school grounds are closed, and this project is on hold...for now. Signage has been created for Castle Hills Elementary, which will be installed, and the gates opened when the school returns to in-person sessions. There is no money in the NEISD budget for signs at Jackson-Keller. As a result, the gates at that school will remain closed to the City.
3. Consolidation of the various plans created for the City over the past years and creation of a master and/or comprehensive plan for the City as a whole and City-owned facilities. Once the plan is in place, the City Manager, Mayor, and Council can develop a Capital Improvements Plan (similar to what the City currently has for streets and drainage). Under this initiative, we formed a subcommittee, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). The CPAC created their vision: "Create Castle Hills, Determining our Future Excellence". One of this group's first efforts is the creation and distribution of a survey for residents and businesses to obtain input on the current and future image for the City. As an off-shoot of this effort, Councilman Joyce and Councilman May initiated a Castle Hills Business Alliance to help further economic development in the City. The Alliance's first meeting was in September and their next meeting is October 30.
4. Creating an identity for Castle Hills through branding and signage. This subcommittee's recent efforts included a new design for street signs and the City's seal. The new street sign design was needed when the contractor for the Banyan/Glentower drainage improvement project offered to install street signs. You can see the

proposed new street sign design in that area of the City or, if you don't want to drive, on Councilman Izband's Facebook page or Next Door. Two options for the City seal have also been posted in both of these locations. The subcommittee is examining ways to get public input on these designs.

5. Improvements to the Commons and the City-owned property on Persimmon to expand their usage by the residents. This subcommittee is looking at options including installing playgrounds, a splash pad, and multi-use sports court; improvement to the existing walking track; fencing; entertainment stage; shaded picnic areas; a walkway from the Commons to Persimmon; and improvements to the drainage ditch behind the Commons including removal of the invasive foliage. Currently Public Works is installing a new water fountain (purchased with donations from the Castle Hills Woman's Club) and decorative walkway near the tree provided by the Castle Hills Garden Club.

The Commission meets once a month on a Saturday at 9:30am. The dates for our meetings and the agenda are posted by the City. We value and hope for community involvement and input as we work together to the "benefit the wellbeing and economic development of the City".

Bonnie Hopke, Chair Parks & Projects Commission



KURT MAY
PLACE 3

Castle Hills is Better, Together

As Abraham Lincoln said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." Our citizens have a bright future and are energized to create that future. Despite our differences in national or state races, it is important that we remain committed to working together to achieve our shared goals here in Castle Hills. Your City Council is committed to working together to achieve this bright future.

We have a plan to boost the City of Castle Hills into a new era by achieving key goals. An era of maintained streets and proper drainage. This is due to a low interest, long term bond financing negotiated by our City Manager, with the support of City Council. Envision Castle Hills as a caring community of excellent residential neighborhoods, with recreational amenities, and services that meet resident's needs. This will be due to the excellent work of our Parks and Project Committee, public works and city employees, leadership from our City Manager and City Council, and input from our citizens. Castle Hills will be a sought-after location for new businesses and a regional destination for shopping and dining. This can only occur with continuing efforts to form and sustain a Castle Hills Business Association, and Council's initiatives to offer various business incentives to relocate new businesses to our city.

City Council has worked together in this difficult 2020 year, to prevent our tax dollars from being wasted on unnecessary lawsuits; to elevate, with civility, our discussion for the public good; to provide transparency and opportunity for citizens to be heard; to slow the pandemic in our community. Whether it's TXDOT's plans for our surrounding roadways, or development ideas for our city, citizen input is sought by your City Council.

We still have common challenges to confront—the pandemic, supporting Castle Hills' businesses, and the threat to our beautiful trees due to

oak wilt. I look forward to working with my friends and fellow Castle Hills residents, **of every political persuasion**, to find the answers, solve the problems, and move our community forward, together.

In closing, I would like to recognize the 101st birthday for **Kay Bennett** of Castle Hills. Her family, friends, and neighbors did a drive by to wish her a Happy Birthday in late September!

Kurt May,
Councilman, Place 3
210-273-8134



JACK JOYCE
PLACE 4

Friends and Neighbors,

As I sit down to write this note, I find that, despite all the noise and angst that seems to surround us from the national level, my overall mood is optimistic. This is because of recent developments in our beautiful City. A 24-year resident of Castle Hills, Mr. Leonard Marino, recently wrote a note to Mayor Trevino giving high compliments to City Manager Ryan Rapelye. Mr. Rapelye had assisted Mr. Marino with resolving some citizen issues, and Mr. Marino was most appreciative. He concluded his note with "You've got a champion there in that job." I couldn't agree more; but need to extend that compliment to all our employees, especially the department heads. We have the best, most dedicated staff we could ever hope for. Congratulations and thanks to Mr. Rapelye and all City staff for your great work!

Another cause for optimism is that leadership is moving forward with new initiatives to improve our City. Council has recently updated the zoning code, approved cash awards to businesses hurt by Covid-19 (funding from the CARES Act), strengthened the landscape ordinance with respect to oak wilt, and approved the issuance of Certificates of Obligation to finance additional street and drainage projects, among other items. We are working hard to make Castle Hills an even more desirable place to live or work!

(Continued on page 8)

Residential and Commercial Service and Repair

Gallos Plumbing Service Co.

Call 210-679-0000

GallosPlumbing@yahoo.com

M-36478 Licensed and Insured

- Sewer Camera Inspections • Excavation
- Foundation Leak Repair • Yard Leaks
- Hydrojet Sewer Drain Cleaning
- Water Heaters + Tankless
- Hydrostatic testing • Tunnel repairs
- Gas line testing, installation and repair

www.gallosplumbing.com



(Continued from page 7)

And with an eye to the future, the Parks and Projects Commission is making good progress on proposed new street signs, improvements to the Commons, and comprehensive planning. Their sub-committee, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), is hard at work creating a process for the new comprehensive plan. They have dubbed the planning effort "Create Castle Hills – Determining Our Future Excellence." Citizen input will be invaluable in putting the plan together, so please be on the lookout for a survey that will go out just after the first of the year, and for subsequent planning workshops to review critical issues in the plan. The City website would be a good starting point for info related to the plan's progress. CPAC meets every other Wednesday at noon and you are most welcome to attend. Zoom is used so no need to worry about Covid.

By the time you read this, our brand-new Business Association will have had their second meeting. So far it is a small but enthusiastic group genuinely interested in the opportunities the Association presents for learning, networking, and connecting to one another and to City organizations. Check them out.

So let's bring on 2021 and have an even better year than this one!

I remain grateful for the opportunity to represent you all. I welcome your input on these or any other topics, so please email me at jjoyce@castlehills-texas.gov.

"The statements and facts contained in newsletter articles from the Mayor and City Council Members are their own personal views and should not be considered official city sponsored statements or facts and should not be relied upon as such."

BEST CHOICE PRIMARY CARE

Best Choice Primary Care is committed to providing safe, quality & compassionate care during this time of crisis in our nation. We are here to serve our community & welcome you to contact us for your healthcare needs.

www.bestchoiceprimarycare.com

Facebook/Instagram: @bestchoiceprimarycare

MOST INSURANCE ACCEPTED	Self-pay visits starting at \$35.00
--	--

www.BestChoicePrimaryCare.com

Vivace

Botox

Vampire Facial

Vampire Breastlift

O-Shot/P-Shot

Hair Restoration

Annuals

**Call Today to
Schedule your
Appointment**

210-474-6020

5525 Blanco, Ste#102

Sick Visits

Well Visits

School Physicals

Women's Health

Trigger Point Injections

Joint Injections



DOUGLAS GREGORY

PLACE 5

Over the years, I as your City Treasurer have tried to ensure that the finances of the City were sound and would give a chance to address needed infrastructure repairs. We have made good strides over the last two years with major street/drainage repair projects. The rating agency, Standards & Poor recently awarded us a "AA" rating enabling us to borrow \$8.25 million at 1.49% over 20 years; a tribute to our confirmed conservative management philosophy. Castle Hills continues to improve our overall outlook by addressing internal improvements without a reduction of quality services.

However, I still feel that San Antonio has demonstrated a reckless disregard of how stormwater is drained downstream into our City, subsequently requiring you, the taxpayer, to come up with millions of dollars to address their mistakes. These actions should not be ignored, time will tell.

Every tax dollar collected is dear to the City, none can be wasted or thrown away. Whether it is property tax, sales tax or fees, because we are a small City, we must be very careful how we spend these dollars. My chief concern is that we must realize that all revenue must be thoughtfully weighed before it is spent. Be alert, it is your money after all. Finally, I will be so glad when 2020 is in the books. One thing after another has made this a nightmare year. Thank heavens we live in Castle Hills which remains a wonderful place to live, raise a family and work. We have much to be thankful for despite what swirls around us.

With that, I wish one and all a Happy Thanksgiving! Gobble, gobble!

Douglas Gregory
City Treasurer



The Castle Hills Woman's Club

The Castle Hills Woman's Club continues their year of service. Please join them for the following event:

January 23 – Hosting the San Antonio Blood Bank for blood donations at City Hall. Times to be announced.

If you are woman resident or business owner in Castle Hills, we would love to have you join our club. Please contact castlehillswomansclub@gmail.com.

Code Compliance



The City of Castle Hills is working on a brochure to send out to residents which highlights property maintenance. This guide will also provide a Q&A on potential violations and the process as it relates to Code Enforcement practices within the City of Castle Hills. For this particular reporter article, we would like to spotlight the need to maintain city easements and rights-of-way. Tenants and/or property owners are responsible for removing weeds, grass, or other vegetation growing to the center line of an alley. Below are the applicable sections of the City's Code of Ordinances:

Sec. 26-118. – Maintaining city easements and rights-of-way.

It is unlawful for any person, or his agent, owning, renting, or having under his control any lot or premises, whether improved

or vacant, within the city, which lot or premises consists in part of city-owned easements or rights-of-way (whether sidewalk, construction, utility, or drainage) to permit same to be covered with high grass or weeds or any of the unsightly conditions enumerated in this article. Such city easements and rights-of-way shall be kept mowed, trimmed, and clean at all times.

Sec. 26-120. – Weeds in alleys.

It shall be unlawful for both the owner and the tenant of any property in the city abutting upon a public alley or way to permit any weeds, grasses, or other vegetation whatsoever to grow therein to the center line to a height of greater than five inches.

ARTICLE IV. – LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE Sec. 48-137. – Height and placement restrictions.

It shall be unlawful for any tree, shrub, vine, hedge, palm, or vegetation of any kind to be located, grown, planted maintained or cultivated in such a manner that any portion of such tree, shrub, vine, palm, or vegetation may overhang or obtrude upon or over any alley unless there is a full 14-foot vertical clearance between the surface of all portions for such alley.

Property maintenance also assists our Public Works department when collecting garbage in the alley. In the past, the overgrown foliage has caused minor damage to the City's sanitation trucks while navigating our City's alleys.

What Families are saying about

Independence HILL

Retirement Community...

"The one bright spot for me during this quarantine is knowing y'all are taking such good care of my mom. Thank you." — *Brenda*

"Thank all the staff for making this quarantine friendly for the residents. You have let them all know they are loved and not alone. Nice to see the quality care these seniors are getting. Prayers for all of you. Stay safe and healthy!" — *Linda*

"It is nice to have confidence that our loved ones are safe, cared for and entertained in spite of the quarantine. Thank you." — *Laura*



Ready to join the Independence Hill Family?

**Call today for more information
and Virtual Tours!**

(210) 209-8404

20450 Huebner Rd., San Antonio, Texas 78258

www.independencehill.com

 www.facebook.com/independencehill



Castle Hills Fire Department

By Chief Jim Ladewig

Over the next couple of Reporter articles, my goal is to provide you with a background and experience of our firefighters who serve the City of Castle Hills. For this article, I wanted to highlight the A shift for the Castle Hills Fire Department.

The Castle Hills Fire Department consists of 20 firefighters, 3 – 6 person shifts, working 24 hour shifts with 48 hours off between shifts. The crews are made up of A, B and C shift, with a Shift Captain, a Lieutenant and 4 firefighters. The following is a brief introduction of the individuals that make up A – shift.

The Captain of A shift is Jeremy Huffman. He is married with a family and long-time resident of the San Antonio area. He oversees the day to day supervision of his crew and serves as the incident commander at all emergency scenes. Captain Huffman has been with the Castle Hills Fire Department for over 8 years, serving at the rank of Captain since September 2019. He had previous experience with the Bexar – Bulverde Fire Department before joining Castle Hills. Besides managing his shift, Captain Huffman also performs commercial Fire Inspections and plans reviews for the city. Jeremy has accomplished extensive training through his career in the fire service including Texas Commission of Fire Protection certifications, Fire Instructor, Fire Officer II and Master Fire Inspector/ Plans Review along with his medical certification as an EMT - Basic.

Lieutenant Lance Buegeler is second in charge of A shift and performs the Captain's duties in the absence of Captain Huffman. Lt. Buegeler is married with a family and came to Castle Hills from the Dallas area. He started with the department in August of 2018 and serving as Lieutenant of A shift since September of 2019. Lance worked with the Dallas Fire Department prior to moving to the San Antonio area and served in the United States Air Force from 2001 to 2007. Lt. Buegeler has TCFP certifications of Fire Instructor and currently attending Fire Officer I in addition to his medical certification as an EMT – Basic. Away from the station on his days off, Lance works part time, for himself, as a General Contractor/Handyman.

Firefighter Grady Schmidt is one of our longest tenured employees with Castle Hills Fire Department, serving for over 21 years since January 1999. Firefighter Schmidt had worked an additional 5 years with the Olmos Park Fire Department prior to being hired at Castle Hills. Grady has his TCFP certification as Driver Operator for Fire Apparatus and extensive training as a firefighter for the Castle Hills Fire Department as well as an EMT – Basic. His many years of experience is invaluable to the other younger firefighters of his shift and department.

Firefighter Ken Lehman is another long-time firefighter for the department, starting just 8 months after Firefighter Schmidt in August of 1999. He too has a bit over 21 years with Castle Hills and additional experience with Cibolo and Selma Fire Departments prior to starting with Castle Hills. Firefighter Lehman has TCFP certifications of Fire Instructor, Fire Officer I, Fire Inspector, Wildland Firefighting and EMT - Basic. With Ken's and Grady's combined experience of 42 years in the Fire Service, it is extremely beneficial to have them working alongside our two newest members of the department, Kendall Kidd and Jorge Sanchez.

Firefighter Kendall Kidd has been with the department for a little over a year with approximately 2 years of additional experience with Wimberley Fire Department. Kendall will be working towards receiving his TCFP Driver Operator certification in the next couple of months. He is an EMT – Basic as well and continues to work part time on his days off with Wimberley Fire Department receiving additional experience in the fire service.

Firefighter Jorge Sanchez is the newest member of the department, starting just this past September. Though new to our department, Firefighter Sanchez comes to us with 2 years of experience with Bastrop Fire Department. We look forward to his service with the department and see both Jorge and Kendall as valuable additions to the department.

A - Shift has a good mix of youth and experience that serves the City and department well. All members are assets to the community and their service is greatly appreciated.



Free Entree
Buy One Entree at Regular Price
Get 2nd Entree Free*
(of equal or lesser value)

Two ways to claim offer:
 Text "youremail castlehills" (no quotation marks) to (210) 960-9627.
 Example: johnsmith@gmail.com castlehills
OR Go to <https://www.egiftia.com/castlehills>



Order To-Go & Pay Online
ordering.app/thaitopaz/pickup

2177 NW Military Hwy, 78213
210-290-9833
www.thaitopaz.com





Castle Hills Police Department IN THE NEWS

By Lieutenant Wayne Waggoner

I think we all can agree 2020 has been a year for the history books. Now, the holiday season is fast approaching, which translates to long shopping lines, vacations to see family, and package deliveries. Unfortunately, during this time, police departments see a rise in crimes such as thefts, vehicle burglaries, residential burglaries, and package/mail thefts. Below are some helpful reminders to keep opportunistic criminals from taking advantage of your generosity:

Traveling for the Holidays? – Contact our dispatch at 210-342-2341 to add your house to our watch list or fill out a Resident Out of Town patrol by request at cityofcastlehills.com.

Receiving packages? – Mail and package thefts increase during the holidays; opportunistic criminals look for packages left on doorsteps or around porches. Have packages delivered to your work or have a neighbor collect them for you. Also keep an eye out for suspicious vehicles following behind delivery/mail trucks and report suspicious activity to the police department.

Shopping for the Holidays? – Never leave purses or other valuables in your vehicle. Do not leave items in plain view. Place your purchases in the trunk of your vehicle especially if you will be shopping at multiple stores. Remember the phrase “hide, lock, take,” and try to park in areas that are well lit and/or heavily traversed. Remain vigilant and be aware of your surroundings.

What to do after the Holidays? – After the festivities, do not leave empty boxes from big screen TVs or other electronics piled up by the trash outside your home. The empty boxes tell would-be intruders what items are inside your home and could make you a target for a home burglary. A better option would be to dispose of boxes in a recycling dumpster or fold the boxes and place them in a trash bag to conceal the boxes from prying eyes.

Sending or receiving large amounts of mail? – Please plan to check your mailbox every weekday including Saturdays, making sure it is empty. Mail thefts from mail boxes are always a concern, but during the holidays we see more checks and gift cards being mailed. It only takes seconds for a thief to drive up to a mailbox and empty its contents.

Please report any suspicious people, vehicles, or activity to the police department, our officers and dispatchers are available 24/7 by dialing 911 for emergencies or 210-342-2341 for non-emergencies. We welcome the opportunity to serve. Have a wonderful and safe holiday season.

Bonus article:

As the Police Chief for the Castle Hills Police Department, I felt compelled to mention to our readers, your police department has uncompromising integrity...to a person. This is why filling vacancies can take years...we place a premium on recruiting and applicant processing to ensure we employ Castle Hills-type officers...the morally uncompromised kind. Further, we are accountable to our citizens, but to one another first. Still further, we operate in the spirit-of-the-law, in contrast to the letter-of-the-law. Inasmuch as our officers have discretion and latitude in the performance of their duties. In those rare instances where an incident seems too straight forward, too letter-of-the-law, rest assured just under the surface there are many more moving parts; conditions or situations that have an impact on outcome. More aptly, not everything is as some present it to be on occasion. And know this, your agency will not compromise its values or its collective sworn oaths to serve others.



Create Castle Hills

Determining Our Future Excellence

Be part of history in the making! The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee for the City of Castle Hills wants your input about the future of our city.

Stay tuned for more information about how to access the Resident and Business Survey and subsequent meetings.

ADVERTISE HERE

Discounts • Multiple AD Sizes

Ask about other newsletters in your area

210-558-3160 sales@neighborhoodnews.com



JOIN OUR TEAM



Seeking: Account Executive, Advertising Sales

Several Markets Available
(210) 775-5830
Generous Compensation Pkg.





City of Castle Hills
209 Lemonwood Drive
San Antonio, TX 78213

PRST. STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN ANTONIO, TX
PERMIT NO.1568

Time Dated

WE DO IT ALL!

- WINDOWS
- MIRRORS
- SKYLIGHTS
- SHOWER ENCLOSURES
- SOLAR SCREENS
- INSECT SCREENS
- PATIO DOORS
- TABLE TOPS

AMERICUS GLASS & MIRROR
(210) 520-9004

Check out our Gallery on Facebook at:
www.Facebook.com/AmericusGlassandMirror

EMAIL US FOR AN APPOINTMENT:
INFO@AMERICUSGLASS.NET
7824 MAINLAND DRIVE, STE.102
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78250

CHECK US OUT AT:
FACEBOOK.COM/AMERICUSGLASSANDMIRROR

24/7 (210) 733-7133
EMERGENCY REPAIR



Published and distributed by:
Neighborhood News, Inc.
3740 Colony Drive Suite LL100
San Antonio, TX 78230
(210) 558-3160 * (210) 558-3163 fax

Info@NeighborhoodNews.com • www.NeighborhoodNews.com
For advertising sales and information please call or send an email to Sales@NeighborhoodNews.com

Articles that appear in the Castle Hills Reporter newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official position of Neighborhood News, Inc. and their publication does not constitute an endorsement therein. The appearance of any advertisement in the Castle Hills Reporter newsletter does not constitute an endorsement by Neighborhood News, Inc. of the goods or services advertised. Neighborhood News, Inc. is not responsible for errors beyond the cost of the actual ad space. Any publication of Neighborhood News, Inc., whether draft or final, is the sole property of Neighborhood News, Inc. and cannot be reproduced or distributed in any way, whether in print or electronically, without the express written consent of Neighborhood News, Inc. ©Neighborhood News, Inc.