

March 2021



# *The Castle Hills Reporter*



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Message from the Mayor.....p.2-4

Message from the City Manager.....p.5

City Council Comments..... p.6-9

Code Compliance Corner..... p.9

Castle Hills Fire Department .....p.10-11

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,

I had meant to submit this article sooner, but as luck would have it, the inclement weather hit. Like many of you, I was hopeful that we would have some respite from another historical event. To this eternal optimist, the storm has identified many opportunities that the City has to do business better and be better prepared. In between treks for supplies for the City and conversations, it gave me plenty of time and ideas to figure out where we need to start. Below, I will tell you about how your City reacted, actions which were taken, and plans to protect our City in the future.

As the weather turned for the worse on Sunday, we began making initial preparations at City Hall to prepare. We double checked the Dispatch backup generator, rounded up barricades, and stocked up on rock salt. Enough for the average ice storm but hardly enough after what we experienced. After the Monday snow and subsequent utility failures, it became imperative that we needed to do more for our residents. Monday February 15th, 2021 at 6 PM, we opened City Hall as a "Warming Center." City Hall appeared to have steady power and we wanted to provide a place for those seeking shelter, this raises the first learning lesson.

## Shelter and Power

The City of Castle Hills did not have a designated shelter nor supplies. It is my goal within the next 60 days to get a designated site in and/or around Castle Hills setup and stocked as shelter. Aside from negotiating space and access, we plan to work with CPS Energy to ensure that site is a designated "Protected Circuit." What is a protected circuit? There are a hierarchy of energy needs that is prioritized due to essentiality of what is being operated. For example, hospitals, airports, nursing homes, and fire stations are a few of what would effectively be last on the list to terminate electric service. After conversations with CPS Energy, it was determined that City Hall is not on a protected circuit. Given that City Hall is our base for City operations it should be identified for an elevated level of priority as well as our future designated shelter. I will be working with CPS Energy to see how these changes can be implemented.

We realized we had a need for a shelter but we also realized that with COVID we had to implement protocols to ensure that we didn't put people at risk. We immediately put together a plan to have temperatures of all person entering the shelter taken and to follow spacing protocols of 6 feet. The Fire Department helped organize chairs in pods in order to keep at a safe distance. This was a great start, but it made it clear that it would help if we had supplies to outfit our shelter.

*(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

**Zina Tedford**  
City Secretary  
(210) 293-9681

**Lara Feagins**  
Finance, (210) 293-9674

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

**Steven Zuniga**  
Interim Police Department Chief  
(210) 342-2341

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

## ALL EMERGENCIES, EMT, FIRE & POLICE CALL 911

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## 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.  
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**Zoning Commission**  
1st Tuesday, 7:00pm  
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## Community Help

Once we realized the severity of the situation, I made several calls to our community partners. First on the list was the American Red Cross in San Antonio. The Red Cross generously allocated 40 cots and blankets for us. Unfortunately, due to the timing they were unable to deliver. Tuesday morning, I trekked to the Red Cross which is located by the AT&T Center. We packed an SUV full of blankets and cots and made slowly made our way back to Castle Hills.

Tuesday afternoon, we began to experience water issues. At the time of writing this article, CPS Energy and SAWS were still trying to restore complete services across San Antonio and they have not had a chance to determine and/or publicize what ultimately led to the utility failures, especially as it relates to Castle Hills. I was informed from SAWS that electrical components failed at the Lemonwood pump station which led to an inoperable pump, which is why much of Castle Hills was without water for almost 30 hours. I have joined many other leaders across the state in demanding an independent investigation to determine what brought us to this point.



Tuesday evening, we secured 10 cases of water from the Red Cross which unfortunately necessitated a second trip to the AT&T Center. After getting the cases, I reached out to our local H-E-B and they generously donated plastic bags to help us allocate the bottled water. Upon returning to City Hall, Interim Police Chief Zuniga and City Manager Rapelye started putting the bottles of water into packs of five in order to distribute to residents. I want to thank the Gonzalez family for stopping by City Hall and helping us get that finished quickly and taking some bags to deliver to their neighbors.

At this point we were able to provide shelter, heat, electricity (to charge devices), cots, blankets, and water. The only thing left was food. I reached out to a couple of our local restaurants to see what they had in terms of food. Chef John Russ with Clementine jumped at the opportunity! Chef Russ agreed to come in and survey his kitchen and see what he could produce for our shelter and first responders.

When I arrived at Clementine, they had individually packed almost 40 meals of soup, rice pilaf, and salad that they generously donated to the City. Appreciation and thanks also go to the Picnikins team for offering their support as well. After Clementine provided their meals, conditions continued to improve; H-E-B was open and restaurants were starting to open and we didn't need additional food.



## Emergency Declaration

Seeing how our community was being impacted, I issued an Emergency Declaration for Castle Hills on Thursday, February 18 hoping this declaration would facilitate Castle Hills to potentially recover funds from the Federal government. The following Saturday, President Biden approved a major disaster declaration for Texas. I have not been briefed on what that means for our City but remain hopeful that we will receive much needed funds. There are a variety of ways that the funds can help our City, a couple of examples, overtime we paid to have additional first responders and/or look to defray the possibility of higher utility bills that the City and the residents may face.

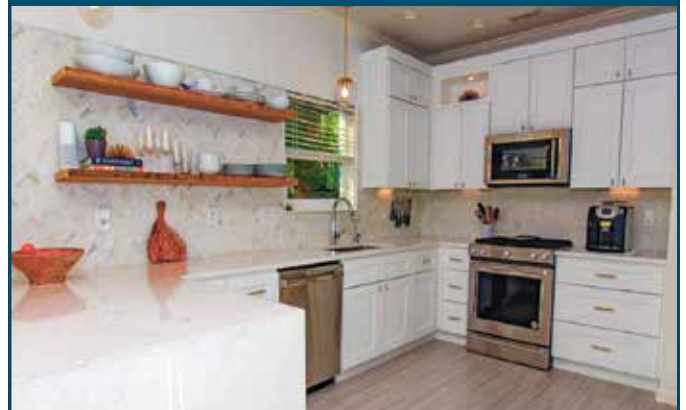
When you receive this article, it is likely that that we will have received information on how CPS Energy plans to handle our electric bills since there is concern that bills may be higher to recover the additional expenses incurred by CPS Energy sourcing electricity. I will be working with our CPS Energy Suburban Cities Representative to better understand the issue and how it will affect us in Castle Hills, recognizing that many in Castle Hills are on fixed incomes and cannot handle the additional expense. Please know that your concerns will be communicated to our partners at CPS Energy.

## Going Forward

The Red Cross has graciously offered to help us put together an emergency plan for future situations. This plan would include supplies (some of which Red Cross already provided to the City at no charge) and help identifying the best shelter site. My goal is talk to

(Continued on page 4)

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(Continued from page 3)

some of the schools and churches in the area and see if one of them would be able and willing to serve as an emergency shelter site. While we have City Hall, Red Cross has recommended having access to multiple restrooms and ideally showers. Once we secure a site, we would ideally try to get that site identified as a protected circuit.

During the boil notice, a resident reached out to me and was not sure if the water boil notice was still in effect. At the time, I told the resident the boil notice was still in effect and let him know we would share any updates on our social media channels and the City's website. The resident advised me he does not use any of the social media channels. At that point, it seemed that we did not have a comprehensive and effective method for communicating with residents for emergencies, which is a big issue. Given our demographics in Castle Hills, this resident is not alone. I asked him if an automated call would be helpful and he said absolutely.

In speaking with City Manager Rapelye, I asked him to explore and provide council options for such a system or service. Mr. Rapelye shared that he has experience with such systems and agreed that this was a good move for the Castle Hills. It is my hope that such a system will allow us to quickly, effectively, and economically to share urgent and/or lifesaving information with all of you. Mr. Rapelye advised that in his previous cities a post card was sent out to help residents update their emergency contact information and share their preferred method to receive information. Once we can get this in front of council, more information will be shared concerning implementation.

## Castle Hills Winter Storm Heroes

I want to personally thank every person that is part of the Castle Hills team. They all had unique challenges but at the end of day they left their families at home (many without power and/or water), braved the dangerous road conditions, and came to the City to serve and protect us. In talking to some of our first responders, it took them over an hour just to make it to the City where it would typically take them 10 minutes. The first night we opened the shelter, Fire Chief Ladewig drove in and spent the night at the Fire Station so that he could personally oversee the Warming Center's successful operation. We are incredibly fortunate to have some of the best first responders around. Our Police and Fire were inundated with calls from accidents and residents in need. I saw in one instance where a resident was unable to drive and a Police Officer brought her to the Warming Center so she could warm up for several hours.

I wanted to make a point to thank our Castle Hills 911 Dispatchers. Typically, our dispatchers are sequestered to their office, where they handle all emergency communications for the City; from answering 911 calls to routing them to the first responders. While our shelter was open, I saw our dispatchers continuously taking calls for accidents, welfare checks, and people reporting outages. In between the nonstop calls, they would take turns getting people checked in to the shelter, assisting those with special needs, and even going as far as placing blankets on the elderly. Thank you to the Castle Hills Dispatch team!

One of the concerns we had was whether we would be able to offer trash service. The roads were treacherous and our garbage trucks experienced the same challenges that our personal vehicles faced.

Our Public Works Director Rick Harada said we need to get it done and he would make it happen. Seeing our Sanitation workers out while there was snow was certainly a sight you don't see every day. I also have to thank Rick for taking his Public Works hat off and putting his plumber hat on and fixing a leak that required us to turn off all the water to City Hall.

On the administration side of Castle Hills, we were relatively shut down except for that fact that our Finance Assistant came in on Tuesday to help process payroll for our employees. Thank you, Ms. Davis, for coming in and ensuring that our essential team members were compensated. Every team has a leader and ours is the City Manager. Mr. Rapelye was at City Hall every day ensuring that every aspect of emergency operation was operating successfully. When we lost water, he reached out to our Bexar County Commissioner and she was able to allocate a pallet of bottled water for Castle Hills.

Lastly, I wanted to share my appreciation for my colleagues. Alderman Izbrand, our resident communications expert, was constantly working to pull the team together and crafting messages to share the City's work. In talking to a resident about water, I advised them that if they needed drinking water, we could send a first responder by to deliver it. His response was Alderman May already brought us some! I am certain that my other council colleagues were out there supporting our community and thank all my colleagues for epitomizing what it means to be public servants.

Seeing how well our team came together made me feel blessed and grateful to live in Castle Hills. A luncheon will be planned in the near future to thank everyone that kept our City moving forward and delivering unparalleled level of services.

## May 2021 Elections

As many of you all have seen, we have elections coming up May 1st. I am humbled to share that this year I do not have an opponent and thank the residents of Castle Hills for entrusting me with the opportunity to serve our amazing City for another two years. While elections can be time consuming, costly, and sometimes unpleasant, they provide an opportunity to get out and to knock on doors and meet you all. While COVID will make for a challenging election year, we all look forward to the not-too-distant future when we can congregate together again as a community. My promise to Castle Hills is to redirect the time and resources that would have spent campaigning and use it to continue improving our City. It is my hope over the next two years, we will embark on the largest capital improvement program that this City has ever seen.

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](mailto:JTrevino@CastleHills-TX.gov)

210-559-5940

*"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."*





## MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

By Ryan D. Rapelye, City Manager

As public servants for the City of Castle Hills, we strive to provide excellent customer service by addressing needs with a caring attitude every day. This service was on display last month in an extraordinary way due to the winter weather storm/utility outage event from February 14 through February 19, 2021.

I would like to provide a quick overview of the event and what actions City staff took before, during, and after the storm. As the weather turned for the worse on Sunday, February 14, staff had initial preparations in place at City Hall which included checking the Dispatch backup generator, collecting barricades, ensuring we had an ample amount of rock salt for disbursement. The rock salt supply was enough for the average ice storm but after a while it was evident the City had to have more on hand. After the Monday's snow/ice storm coupled with utility failures, it became imperative the City needed to do more for our residents. On Monday February 15th, we opened the Castle Hills City Hall as a "Warming Center."

City Hall did not lose power and at a minimum, the "Warming Center" served as a place for residents to seek shelter for a period of time. The City was able to maintain this "Warming Center" through the duration of the storm. The City Hall chambers was not set-up as shelter; however, the City did provide the ability for residents to get warm and charge their phones. When the City lost water for a certain duration, City staff made requests to Bexar County and received pallets of water for distribution.

As always, our departments and employees worked to ensure City services were maintained during this unprecedented event. This service was on display during this event, our first responders answered record number calls during this period and worked long hours in frigid temperatures responding to accidents around the community, conducting welfare checks on our citizens, distributing bottled water, assisting with the "Warming Center" at City Hall, monitoring road conditions and placing of barricades where needed. Our dispatch team did a phenomenal job handling all inbound calls during the winter storm from residents experiencing loss of heat, water, smoke alarms going off and broken water pipes.

Our Public Works team continued to ensure sanitation collection throughout the City and repairing water leaks at the City of Castle Hills "Warming Center" to ensure the restrooms were operational.



I would like to recognize and commend the leadership of Fire Chief Ladewig, Interim Police Chief Zuniga and Public Works Director Harada. I would also like to recognize Interim Police Captain Waggoner and Dispatch Supervisor Shannon Parker for their efforts and assistance during this event. I want to recognize the Mayor and Council's leadership throughout this ordeal, this was a true team effort. The dissemination of information through social media or City's website to update residents was communicated well, water was distributed throughout the community by councilmembers and calls were made to the utility companies in effort to get status reports and work to expedite restoration of utility services. Moving forward, we look at this as lessons learned. The City will take the necessary steps to ensure we are fully prepared for a future event. We will be working with CPS Energy to ensure City Hall facilities are on a protected grid and will also look to procure the necessary generators to maintain service. Mayor Trevino requested that staff to look into the use of an emergency notification system to notify residents in emergency situations and staff is researching this request.

I would also like to thank all city employees for their professionalism and service during this time when the residents needed our assistance during this critical time. This event was challenging to the citizens and staff, as City Manager, I am very proud to say that together we made it through this historical storm.

Over the last year, the world has faced many obstacles from COVID-19 and now an unprecedented winter storm. Through it all, our extraordinary employees continued to go above and beyond the call of duty; in this case left their families who may have been impacted with loss of power and water issues and putting themselves in harm's way to take care of others. The employees of the City of Castle Hills decided themselves and collectively to demonstrate that "Teamwork" is not a just a motto, but a standard of quality. Thank you again for your service. Team Castle Hills!

As we approach Spring and warmer weather, I would like to invite residents to come and enjoy the new walking trails in "The Commons". This project involved the installation of 6' wide concrete trails. I would like to recognize P.W. Director Harada and his Public Works team for the removal and disposal of the existing asphalt trail, with a cost savings to the City of \$12,000! Public Works has installed additional lighting and the water fountain through the area, which were donated by the Castle Hills Woman's Club.



If you have any questions, please contact me at [rrapelye@castlehills-tx.gov](mailto:rrapelye@castlehills-tx.gov) or at the office at 210.293.9673.



# COUNCIL COMMENTS



**JOE IZBRAND**

PLACE 1

Mayor Pro-Tem

Dear Neighbors,

Spring is traditionally considered a time of renewal, and it is probably fair to say there has never been a time in which we looked forward to that renewal more than this year. With the February winter storm and its power and water outages still fresh in our memory, it is uplifting to think about warmer days, and plants and trees budding with new growth.

This spring is also a time for optimism as we witness the end of a year of life-altering challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic. With greater availability of vaccinations every week, and a decline in the number of cases, there is hope that life may return to normal in the coming months. Yet even in this moment of optimism, we pause to honor the memory of so many who are no longer with us because of the virus.

As we look toward to spring, there are also many reasons to feel

upbeat about where we are going as a city. High on that list is excitement that Fiesta Castle Hills will take place this June. Norma McClelland and a team of extraordinary volunteers are hard at work planning the events while also identifying appropriate health and safety measures so we can all come together safely in celebration.

The Parks and Projects Committee is deeply involved in a review of the city's master plan, listening to citizen input and planning forums and workshops to obtain resident and business input on a comprehensive vision for the future of our city.

The next set of streets identified for major improvements has been identified and engineering plans are now being developed, with work scheduled to begin later this summer.

A series of upgrades at The Commons, including lighting, water fountain and walking paths, are making it an even more inviting place to come to enjoy fresh air, the outdoors, and camaraderie of neighbors.

That spirit of camaraderie has sustained the residents of Castle Hills through the most trying of times. I continue to marvel at the resilience of our community in the face of adversity, and how neighbors have consistently come together to help each other, whether in the darkest moments of the pandemic or during our history-making winter storm.

Our return to normalcy will still take time. We have not yet defeated the pandemic, but we are getting closer. We must take the time to assess the root causes behind the outages we experienced during the freezing weather and be firm in our expectation of accountability.

Yet, in these first days of spring, let's look forward with a sense of hope, and optimism, and goodwill. These are the defining characteristics of the people of Castle Hills.

I am tremendously honored to serve as your Place 1 Alderman. I invite you to stay in touch, and let me know how I can be of service to you. Keep up with city news and connect with me at [www.facebook.com/IzbrandPlace1](https://www.facebook.com/IzbrandPlace1). You can also share your thoughts, ideas and comments with me via email at [IzbrandPlace1@gmail.com](mailto:IzbrandPlace1@gmail.com).

Welcome to spring.



**FRANK PAUL**

PLACE 2



*Happy New Year!*

Mr. Paul continues his generous spirit and has devoted his article space to helping our neighbors learn more about our community groups. This month he has asked me to write about the Castle Hills Woman's Club (CHWC).

The motto of the CHWC is GOOD WORKS, GOOD FRIENDS, GOOD TIMES! This year we have focused on the GOOD WORKS

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portion and have discovered that doing our good works brings great friendships and fun times! Our club has recently sponsored a Food Drive and volunteer opportunity for our members at the San Antonio Food Bank. In November, we collected over 100 toys and \$300.00 for Elf Louise. Just this past month, we donated Santa for Senior gift bags to our Ventura Hills Assisted Living neighbors and boxes of cookies for each city employee.

We complete these GOOD WORKS by following in the tradition of the ladies who came before us. The Woman's Club (woman's because the club belongs to each individual lady) has a long history of helping in our City. The club was formed in 1952 in an effort to promote interest in beautification, safety, friendship, health, and good citizenship. The ladies who came before us worked to help purchase a fire engine, the pouring of a concrete slab for the fire engine, and a civic center. They helped with funds and "woman power" to decorate/refurbish spaces at City Hall, plant trees, tutor at local schools and many other projects. In total the CHWC has donated over \$220,000 to the betterment of the city. In the past few years, our club has purchased an adaptive swing for the Castle Hills Elementary School playground, helped fund the new water fountain at the Commons and also helped to purchase a new podium for the council chamber along with several mattresses for the fire department. The CHWC is always a generous sponsor of Fiesta Castle Hills and the ladies have a good time helping to run the children's area at the event.

In non-COVID years, we have monthly meetings with informative programs designed to foster civic interest in our members. We also host social times where we can get together with our friends

and visit. While this year, our formal and social meetings have been put on hold, our civic interest remains high. Membership in our club is open to all women who reside in Castle Hills or who are business owners in our City. The cost of membership is \$25.00 per year. We encourage any woman interested in helping our city, having fun, and building friendships to consider joining us. We would love to have you!

GOOD WORKS, GOOD FRIENDS, GOOD TIMES since 1952! I think the members who selected this motto knew exactly what they were doing. Come join us as we look forward to many more GOOD TIMES!

*Happy 2021!*

**Judy Crawford**

President – Castle Hills Woman's Club  
[castlehillswomansclub@gmail.com](mailto:castlehillswomansclub@gmail.com)



**KURT MAY**  
PLACE 3

## Spring Forward

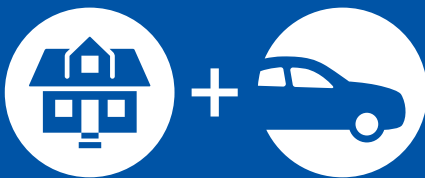
The economy of Castle Hills, like most cities in Texas and the United States, took a big hit in the last year due to the pandemic. Our city, however, shows signs of a determined rebound and resilience. This is due to our city administrator's prompt action in claiming Cares Act relief funds (the city was able to claim 99.9 percent of the available public relief funds we were eligible to receive for pandemic related expenses), the Council's prudent budget planning in the Fall which produced a balanced budget, the city's solid financial plan for continued infrastructure improvements at historically low interest rates, and better than expected sales tax revenue statistics appearing in the last quarter of 2020. Sales tax revenue was actually up 8.12 percent in November 2020, compared to pre-pandemic sales tax revenue in November 2019. The next few months will determine whether this is an anomaly, or sustainable economic progress – I believe that it is in large part because of the efforts of our residents to intentionally support our local businesses during these difficult times.

Whether this trend continues depends to a great extent on what we, the citizens of Castle Hills, do. Will we continue to support local businesses, and restaurants? Will our court collection of revenue and city operations such as permitting, and passport processing return to levels known pre-pandemic? The answer is found in how we each decide to successfully confront the Covid-19 virus, and how we decide to support our local business. I encourage all of us to care for each other in protecting against the spread of the virus, getting the vaccinations, and spending our dollars locally to support Castle Hills businesses.

To accomplish the goal of rebounding economically, the Council continues to work on supporting the local economy. For example, Council approved the permits necessary in January to bring to Castle Hills a new employer—Dutch Brothers Coffee House, that will provide jobs, and sales tax revenue. I also continue to

(Continued on page 8)

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(Continued from page 5)

work with Councilman Jack Joyce to promote the Castle Hills Business Association, to promote economic growth. Our latest conversations involve the use of Zoom and collaboration with other local Chambers of Commerce, to promote the Castle Hills business community.

Finally, due to the pandemic, it is crucial that our planning for celebrating our city's 70th Anniversary be safe and based on the latest CDC guidelines. Over the course of the next few weeks, I will be coordinating the next steps for the Castle Hills Historical Society, sending out Zoom meeting links. We need to document our past history and plan our future celebrations. Several citizens have already reached out to contribute to the planning, and many more will be needed to document the incredible stories of our citizens. Please use the email below, or call me, to receive the Zoom link for upcoming Historical Society planning sessions. I encourage citizens to send in their own story, the history of other citizen's accomplishments, or observations of significant events they have witnessed in our city or just join us on a Zoom meeting so we can hear the stories directly. These will be used for our documented history and celebration, scheduled for later this year. I am looking forward to springing forward with our planning and learning more about your lives, our city's past, and your aspirations for the future.

#### Kurt May

City Councilman, Place 3

210-273-8134 • [kurtgenemay@gmail.com](mailto:kurtgenemay@gmail.com)



### JACK JOYCE

PLACE 4

Friends and Neighbors,

As we enter into a new year, it is my pleasure to note that the functioning of our Castle Hills city government continues on the comeback trail. No need to relive the recent past; but it is a real pleasure for me to be a member of a Council team who genuinely cares about the City and has supported staff as they handle day-to-day operations.

The latest good news is the hiring of Ms. Zina Tedford as full-time city secretary. Zina comes to us with lots of experience and City Manager Rapelye is already singing her praises. She is getting things organized in a way that a city like ours ought to be run. Our best wishes to Ms. Brenda Craig who held the position part-time for the last year and was highly effective in her short tenure with us. We still need a full-time finance director; but in the interim Ms. Feagins keeps the finances in ship shape on a part-time basis. We were saddened to see the departure of Police Chief Johnny Siemens, who took a job with a larger city. Chief Siemens did an amazing job and we wish him well. Captain Steve Zuniga has been appointed Interim Police Chief and is well prepared to step into the Chief's position. We know we are in steady hands as the search for a new Chief gets underway. The last note under staffing is to mention that Council is deliberating over the details

of a multi-year contract with Mr. Rapelye and we trust the details will be worked out quickly. No one deserves it more than he.

In the meantime, the rest of us Council members continue to work on initiatives that have been previously mentioned in this column. Noteworthy is the recent suggestion by Councilman Izbrand to start a governmental relations committee in order to better represent the city's interests to higher governmental bodies. Council appointed Mr. Izbrand to serve on this committee with Mayor Trevino, so look for improved communication of Castle Hills' interests to the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, the State of Texas and others.

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee continues to work on gathering input from all our citizens and businesses. Please stay tuned for announcements of workshops at which you can participate in discussions of various aspects of our City's future.

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



### DOUGLAS GREGORY

PLACE 5

Recently, Castle Hills along with your entire state, endured one of the hardest stretches of winter weather in the last 100 years. Most of us were confined in our homes by bitter cold, snow and ice while at the same time had to survive a loss of water and heat.

The Thursday morning before the polar blast hit, I discussed with our City Manager Rapelye, if there were any plans in place to prepare for the cold in regards to opening City hall; he mentioned there were none. After a telephone call to the Mayor Pro Tem, Mr. Joe Izbrand, I called our City Manager back and urged that plans be drawn up. Mr. Rapelye quickly got to work in coordination with our Mayor, we eventually had a "Warming Center" at City Hall with cots and blankets donated by the Red Cross but most of all a safe place for the those who might need one.

In the future, Castle Hills must have plans not only for the extreme cold but also for blackouts during extreme heat. A new power generator must be bought for our municipal buildings and cots, blankets, and water must be available. I believe that the Police

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Department could have a list of all who might be in potential danger if left to fend for themselves while staff could call those that may be in need. These are rough suggestions but they are the minimum actions that can and must be considered to protect you.

One thing is clear, never again should be we left to our own devices when a serious weather event. I am proud of our City Manager for his effective use of his relationships during this time which went a long way for the Mayor and Councilmembers to do the best we could for the City.

Toward the end of the polar blast, I went out to deliver water to those in need. Although I could not visit everyone, two stories stand out. A friend of mine, a widow, was alone in her house. When I questioned her, she told me it was her birthday. I, at least, had the chance to give her fresh water and tell her "Happy Birthday!" Another resident, living with relatives, was in need of fresh water. Though 106 years old, she was chipper while her niece was very thankful for the water and the drive by.

There are things your City government can do to address future emergencies. Next time, and there will be a next time, we will be better prepared. This is the very least that can be expected.

## Code Compliance Corner

I hope everybody made it as unscathed as possible through the recent winter emergency event and the subsequent recovery challenges.

I want to take this month's article space to acknowledge the Castle Hills Fire and Police Departments during those difficult days. As a retired Police Supervisor from another state, I can tell you from first-hand experience that we first responders, do not, in fact, have all the answers nor can we create solutions when none are present. What I *can* tell you that we *do* have families and loved ones and face the same challenges every other human deals with during times of crisis. The same goes for the first responders in Castle Hills yet, despite their own problems and personal situations, these professionals showed up for duty and dispatched or responded to calls for service on a night with subzero temperatures no differently than they would have on a summer's night with 70-degree temperatures. In fact, despite an increase in "aid to citizens" calls and increased "traffic control" calls, these departments actually had supplemented staffing to ensure that emergency services could be delivered. At no time were you, the citizens of Castle Hills, without access to emergency services.

This empirically serves support the fact that your Fire and Police Departments are staffed with caring, able, and professional capable individuals who put "mission" before "self". So, a big "THANK YOU!!" to each and every individual in the dispatch center and both departments who stood by their oath to serve and protect.



Please pick up after your pets. Take a plastic bag with you on your walks and dispose of it properly. Obey the leash law. All

dogs and cats must be confined to their owner's property at all times except when on a leash.



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# Castle Hills Fire Department

By Chief Jim Ladewig

The final group of firefighters that make up the three shifts of the department is C-Shift. The Shift Captain of C-Shift is David Cain who has been with the department for a little over 9 years. He is married, has a family and lives on the outskirts of northeast San Antonio and is originally from Lubbock. He initially joined the Army after high school and continues to serve in the Army Reserves. He has 19 years of military service. He also works part time as a Fire Inspector with the city of Selma. Captain Cain is an EMT-Basic and holds certifications as an Advanced Firefighter, an Advanced Fire Inspector, Fire Officer I and is a Fire Instructor with the Texas Commission of Fire Protection.

The second in charge and Lieutenant of C-Shift is Joseph Lopez. Joseph has been with the department for 3 years and came to us from Balcones Heights Fire Department where he had served for 10 years. He also had volunteered with the China Grove Volunteer Fire Department to begin his firefighting career. Lt. Lopez is originally from San Antonio and currently resides in the San Antonio area. He is an EMT-Basic with the Texas Department of State Health Services and holds fire certifications of Advanced Firefighter, Fire

Instructor and currently pursuing his Fire Officer I certification.

The senior firefighter on C-Shift is Todd Lux. He has been with the department for 20 years with prior experience with Terrell Hills and Kendalia Fire Departments. Todd is married, with a family and lives north of San Antonio. He is one of two Advanced EMTs and holds certification a certification as AN Advanced Firefighter with the Texas Commission of Fire Protection.

Another one of our senior firefighters is Dustin Vackar, who has been a firefighter for the department for the past 11 years. He also comes to us with prior experience with the Kerrville and Helotes Fire Departments, and starting as a firefighter while Shavano Park was still a volunteer department. Dustin is originally from the San Antonio area and continues to reside in the area. Firefighter Vackar also is an EMT-Basic and is an Advanced Firefighter with the Commission.

Firefighter Bobby Trojcak has been with the Castle Hills Fire Department for 7 years. He came to us by way of Buda Fire Department and currently works with Wimberley Fire Department on a part-time basis. Boibby is originally from San Angelo is married with a family and lives east of San Antonio. Firefighter Trojcak is another one of our EMT-Basics and also holds certifications with the Texas Commission of Fire Protection. Firefighter Trojcak is an Intermediate Firefighter, Firefighter Instructor II and a Fire Officer I.

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The newest member of C-Shift is Karl Citarella who has been with the department for a little more than 3 years. Firefighter Citarella also has worked part-time for the Wimberley Fire Department for the past 6 years. Karl is originally from Riverside, California where he enlisted and served in the Marine Corps for 5 years before making his way to Texas. Firefighter Citarella is too, an EMT-Basic and certified as a Firefighter and currently pursuing his Fire Instructor with the Commission as well working toward his Bachelors Degree in Fire Administration at Texas A&M University at San Antonio.

These are the firefighters that make up C-Shift of your Castle Hills Fire Department. This shift also has a mix of youth and experience that complement one another and are very capable in delivering the emergency services to meet the expectations of the residents of Castle Hills.

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## Castle Hills Police Department IN THE NEWS

By Esteban Zuniga, Interim Chief of Police  
Wayne Waggoner, Interim Captain

Many residents may or may have not heard that Chief Johnny Siemens is no longer with the Castle Hills Police Department. In December just before the Christmas holidays, Chief Siemens was offered and accepted a position as Chief of Police with the Universal City Police Department. Chief Siemens started his career as a law enforcement officer with the Universal City Police Department and then moved to the Boerne Police Department. Following the Boerne position as a Sergeant, he came over to the Castle Hills Police Department where he served as Captain and then was promoted to Chief.

Upon Chief Siemens' separation, City Manager Ryan Rapelye appointed me, Esteban Zuniga, as Interim Chief of Police until the position can be filled permanently. I started as a patrol officer with the Castle Hills Police Department in September of 2010 after then Captain Wayne Davis recruited me from the South Padre Island Police Department where I served as a Detective/Training Coordinator. During my time with Castle Hills, I have served as a Corporal and Sergeant then in the capacity as Captain for the last three years. In total I have been in law enforcement 26 plus years.

Another person that needs mention is Interim Captain Wayne Waggoner who has been with the Castle Hills Police Department for years far exceeding my time here and offers a great deal of experience. Interim Captain Waggoner worked for the Helotes Police Department before joining the Castle Hills Police Department and has also moved up the ranks serving as Corporal and Sergeant. In 2018, he was promoted to Lieutenant where he and I worked in tandem providing administrative support for Chief Siemens as well as overseeing the different divisions within the department.

Interim Captain Waggoner and I share the desire to continue leading the department in the same direction as Chief Siemens. There is of course the need of having to making adjustments and changes where needed to continually provide the best quality service that we now offer to the great citizens of Castle Hills.

While City Manager Rapelye proceeds with the hiring process in search of the new Chief of Police, we both equally hope to be considered for that position from within and have vowed to one another that we will continue to support each other in our respective roles should the City Manager and City Council proceed in that direction. Should the opposite occur, we will both assist the new chief in getting up to speed on the culture of the department and of the City of Castle Hills.

In the meantime, we are both here to assist or answer any concerns that you may have and "to provide unrivaled policing services to an engaged and diverse community."



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