



The Castle Hills **Reporter**

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Friends,

It is that time of the year, we are just days away from the holidays and 2022. Around this time, it is useful to reflect on the past year and ask how we can really make the best of what's left.

As I look back on 2021, I couldn't be prouder of the City of Castle Hills community, Council, and City. It is no doubt that the pandemic has been challenging for us all but I am big believer that our struggles have fortified us. When I first took office as Mayor, many of my conversations out in the greater San Antonio community revolved around the cloud of turmoil that loomed over Castle Hills. Over the last year, the conversations have evolved into praise of how well our City is doing and how we are moving the needle.

In the last year we have welcomed several new businesses; Trey Solis - State Farm Insurance Agency, Southern Liquors, Elena Salon Studios, and Tu Asador Restaurant. Soon we will be joined by Dutch Bros Coffee, Golden Chick Restaurants, and SoHO Wine and Martini Bar. It has been discussed ad nauseum but this year we also borrowed money for infrastructure improvements for the first time in modern City history. The Capital Improvement Plan that was passed is the largest comprehensive plan in the City's history. For perspective, we historically would do 1 large street or drainage project a year. Over the next 12 months, we will complete 20 streets of maintenance, 10 reconstructed streets, and 3 drainage projects.

I'm proud to see how the City of Castle Hills has grown and flourished, that being said, our work is far from being done. I'm grateful that many of our City leaders have put their time, talent, and treasures into special projects to improve our City. With such a small City staff, this is the best way for us to make a big impact.

TML

Last month, City Secretary, Ms. Zina Tedford, City Manager, Mr. Ryan Rapelye, Councilman Jack Joyce, Councilman Joe Izbrand, and I had the opportunity to attend the Texas Municipal League conference in Houston. The conference was great, for many reasons! First off, this was the first conference for many since the pandemic started and most people were excited at the opportunity to be around friends and colleagues. It also gave us the chance to connect with other City leaders from across the State and meet the teams of some of the vendors that we work with on a regular basis. It has been said that most Cities have the same problems and challenges, they are just a little different.

One of the other benefits of conferences are the educational/informative sessions. I attended a session titled "Lessons Learned from Winter Storm Uri and Actions Taken to Prevent Future Grid Disasters." One of the speakers on the panel was ERCOT Interim CEO Brad Jones. Mr.

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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

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Zina Tedford
City Secretary
(210) 293-9681

Lara Feagins
Finance, (210) 293-9674

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

Steven Zuniga
Police 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
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3rd Monday, 5:30pm
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(Continued from page 2)

Jones and his fellow panelists went into detail on how the State is working to ensure that points of failure from the February Winter Storm are addressed. Some of what was discussed at TML was discussed in greater detail at the first in-person Texas Municipal Officers ERCOT Advisory Board meetings.

ERCOT

Monday, October 18th we had our first in-person meeting for the Texas Municipal Officers ERCOT Advisory Board. As mentioned in a previous Reporter, as Mayor I was instrumental in the formation of this board after what transpired in February. This meeting took place at ERCOT's headquarters in Austin and proved to be very helpful for everyone that attended. The State is working to address all areas that we experienced failures during the winter storm. As such, ERCOT is working with the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) to determine what new weatherization standards will be released in November. If that last sentence gave you some heartburn, let me give you some good news. While NERC will not release their new standards until November, I've been told that CPS Energy has already started to assess their systems here locally. I was pleased to know that CPS wasn't waiting till November to get started.



Brad Jones, ERCOT
with JR Trevino

While I am glad that CPS is getting a start on addressing issues, it is important to note that CPS is one of many generators in the State. This will ultimately be a larger issue that we as a State have to deal with. The question is, are we as ratepayers willing to pay 10%, 20% or x% more to have our infrastructure better weatherized for a winter storm that is only predicted to have once every so many years. These are some of the conversations that are going on at a State level. While Castle Hills is a small spoke in the wheel on the State grid, the City of Castle Hills has taken some matters into our own hands. By using American Rescue Plan Act funding to procure generators for City Hall and for the Fire Department. The goal is for to be able to provide an emergency shelter, whether during the winter, summer, or just a random outage; for Castle Hills residents.

Lastly, as you get this article, we will hopefully be in full swing of numerous construction projects across the City. Whether it is your kitchen or your street; construction can be messy, noisy, and just inconvenient. As we embark on this journey to invest in our City, I ask for your patience. If you have problems, questions, or concerns; please call the City Manager or me. You may remember that I was the advocate for construction project signs (another example of taking a cue from our colleagues) encouraged the street contractor to include QR codes on our construction signs. One QR code will show a map of the work being done and the other will link to the City's Capital project page with more details about the project. Aside from being transparent, I want to ensure that we as the City are providing you the information at your fingertips.

As always, if I can be of assistance please do not hesitate to reach out. I look forward to seeing you at **"The Lighting of the Lights"** in the Commons on **December 5th at 4 PM!**

Yours in service,

JR Treviño, Mayor
jtrevino@castlehills-tx.gov
210-559-5940



MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

By Ryan D. Rapelye, City Manager

FY 2022 Budget & Capital Projects!

The FY 2022 Budget was adopted on September 15, 2021, and FY 2022 will commence on January 1, 2022. The adopted budget includes projected revenues, allocation of operational funds necessary to maintain quality services for our residents and recommended capital projects necessary to preserve the current and future needs of the City. The adopted budget is balanced as required by law despite the economic uncertainty related to the pandemic. The adopted budget highlights key points important to the citizens of Castle Hills and reflects our commitment to provide excellent municipal services to the citizens and businesses while maintaining stringent fiscal controls.

As we look forward to next year in the programming for the necessary allocation of revenue and expenses, we continue to be mindful of the impact and on-going challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has changed not only our lives, but how we operate at the City. Despite the challenges we face every day, with the support of the citizens, City Council and staff, we pushed through and found ways to sustain city operations during the current fiscal year. By all means, it is not perfect, a lot of trial and error, but we pushed forward and continue to learn and live the "New Normal". City hall's doors were closed to the public for majority of last year and re-opened the doors in late May 2021 continuing to take proactive measures to reduce exposure to COVID-19 protecting the citizens, their families and co-workers. When City Hall was closed, City Employees rose to the challenges of maintaining city operations remotely from home or at city hall.

As City Manager, I had a number of goals to as part of the development of the FY 2022 Budget which included, a long-term strategy for our sanitation services, establishing funds for development of a beautification program for monthly maintenance of the City's assets and ROW's in and around our community,

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address the necessary improvement to the City's Information Technology infrastructure and evaluating the compensation plan for City employees. Over the last year, City staff has continued to monitor revenue and expenditures within our current FY 2021 Adopted Budget and the potential long-term impact of COVID-19.

As many entities, the City did lose programmed revenue in certain areas of the general fund. However, we are very optimistic in the growth of sales tax, commercial permitting and the addition of new businesses to the community this year. The City received grant funding from the American Rescue Plan Act in the amount of approximately \$1,106,503. The City has already received half of this amount in the FY 21 budget and the other half will be allocated the FY 22 budget. These funds will subsidize a number of infrastructure projects, one-time capital purchases and make up for revenue lost as a result of the pandemic. In the FY 2021 Adopted Budget, we have programmed the utilization of these funds to provide revenue replacement, replacement of funds related to payroll expenditures from our first responders, one-time capital purchases for a generator for City Hall, and upgrades to the City's IT Infrastructure/cybersecurity improvements, plus the funding for phase II of the renovations to the Fire department.

This unprecedented year has brought many unexpected challenges and opportunities. The City stands prepared to address these challenges and opportunities regarding public health, safety, and fiscal responsibility. As an economic indicator, we are able to program and project further increases in sales tax revenue and will continue to monitor the potential impact this may have on current and future City operations. In preparing this year's budget, we recognized that the City exists in a new financial environment where both residents and businesses are facing hardships related to COVID-19. This is expected to have a continued financial impact to the City that will require us to exercise additional controls over our expenses to offset decreases in revenues.

The FY 22 adopted budget focuses on maintaining the current quality level of City services, using a very conservative approach to revenues. The FY 22 budget still leaves the City with a healthy general fund reserve at six months. These reserves will continue to be maintained at adequate levels, which should protect the City from future uncertainties. This is an indicator of the City's healthy financial condition and as we continue to maintain our "AA" rating

with hopes of elevating this rating in the future. Most municipalities typically have a three-month reserve.

Over the last year, our City leadership has taken monumental steps to tackle long-term infrastructure needs by the issuing Certificates of Obligations (CO's) to address streets and drainage infrastructure. As part of the FY 2022 Budget, staff anticipates the completion of two major capital projects, Banyan/Carolwood Drainage project Phase II and the \$3 Million allocated to reconstruct ten city streets. Recently, the bids which came in for the street reconstruction project, the awarded bid was \$1.9 million, leaving additional funding to do a second phase of street reconstruction. In December, we are hoping to bring forward for City Council's review and approval an updated Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to illustrate what has been completed, what projects need to be reprioritized and to detail related costs for each project. This will continue to help guide us over the next 3-5 years in order to address our infrastructure needs.



As we move forward with these capital projects, we are working to build an informational page with links on our city's website devoted to these capital projects. This will continue to evolve as we take the steps to construct a new website for the City of Castle Hills. As City Manager, I am pleased with the steps to address long-term infrastructure needs throughout the City.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to all our employees during this year's budget process and appreciate all they do for the City and our organization on a daily basis. 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.

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COUNCIL COMMENTS



JOE IZBRAND

PLACE 1
Mayor Pro-Tem

Dear Neighbors,

This is the time of year when we turn our attention to gatherings of family and friends, the celebration of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah, and the start of a New Year. As I talk to neighbors about their plans this year, I hear a great deal of optimism and excitement about the upcoming holidays.

Yet, at the same time, there is anxiety as we go into winter about a repeat of freezing conditions reminiscent of last February's extreme weather, which impacted electric and water services for many. Memories of those disruptions are still all too fresh in the minds of residents.

The Old Farmer's Almanac, which forecasted last winter's severe conditions, is predicting that this winter will also be harsh but hopefully not as severe as in early 2021. Regardless, we should be prepared.

In the aftermath of the storm, the city council formed a committee to evaluate our overall response as a city and initiate steps to address vulnerabilities within our control.

One of the important learnings from the winter storm was the recognition that we need a more effective way of communicating with our community during an emergency.

During the freeze and power disruptions, I spent several days posting updates about the city's response and relief efforts to my Facebook account, www.facebook.com/izbrandplace1, to help keep the community informed. Yet there are a significant number of our residents who aren't on social media and may not have received the information.

As part of our post-storm evaluation, and working closely with City Manager Ryan Rapelye and City Secretary Zina Tedford, we have now identified a community alert system. Known as I-INFO, this system enables residents to receive email, text or phone notifications during local emergencies and it complements other ways we communicate with residents including social media channels.

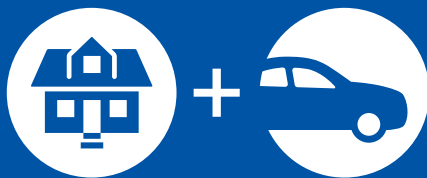
The system also lets you sign up for messages about non-emergency community activities, public works notices and other city information to help keep you informed.

I-INFO will be operational by January 1. I hope you will take the time, before we all get caught up in the flurry of holiday activities, to sign up for these alerts and notifications. It will make a real difference in keeping you informed and can provide some peace of mind as we head into winter. You can sign up at www.cityofcastlehills.com.

My family and I wish you the very best for the holiday season and coming new year. I invite you to stay in touch with me at www.facebook.com/izbrandplace1. Happy holidays!

(Continued on page 6)

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(Continued from page 5)



KURT MAY
PLACE 3

I would like to thank our residents who supported these events and welcomed San Antonio Mayor, Ron Nirenberg, and his wife Erika Prosper Nirenberg to our event, along with San Antonio City Councilman, Mario Bravo. Also, recognition is in order for those who worked on the Committee to organize the events. Judy Crawford, Maddie Dillion, Sherry Yeckel, Jason Smith, Wayne Carter, Margaret Sylvia, and one other who I'm drawing a blank on right now. It was a lot of fun, and we will be planning additional events soon.



JACK JOYCE
PLACE 4

Friends and Neighbors,

We continue to make steady progress on Create Castle Hills, our Comprehensive Plan. With the Survey and Speakers Forum behind us, our first interactive workshop was recently completed and was quite successful. Citizens were able to participate in person as well as via Zoom, allowing for maximum participation. The LPA Architects team facilitated the discussion and walked citizens through three planning exercises, probing their aspirations and priorities for our City. Among the highest priority ideas from citizens were the need for connection to greenspace, the need to improve pedestrian and biking infrastructure, and the need to address economic development.

There is one more interactive workshop in October and from there the architects will spend time analyzing the results, work with CPAC (Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee) to refine the recommendations and present to Council on December 14.

The draft Create Castle Hills document should be available for public input in early 2022. Once complete and approved, CPAC will work with Mr. Rapelye and his team to incorporate into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

We at CPAC are extremely excited at the possibilities the Plan will present for our City and hope that the public will continue to be engaged and participate with us in this important effort.

Please feel free to contact me with any thoughts and ideas you may have.

Jack Joyce
jjoyce@castlehills-tx.gov
210-827-7222



DOUGLAS GREGORY
PLACE 5

Recently, your City Council voted on the annual budget. Over \$300,000 in additional spending was attached by Council Members before the final version was passed. Since I agreed with about 90% of the budget, I accepted it. However, there seems to be the suggestion that overruns could be covered by our reserves. This idea should be rejected.

Several months ago, Castle Hills borrowed around \$8,000,000 at 1.4% interest, the purpose is to make significant street and drainage repairs in our city. This excellent economic move by this Council was much needed. In fact, we should have borrowed at least another \$8,000,000 while rates are so low.

The city received a "AA" rating by Standards and Poor's, because of our fiscal strength; this includes our 6-month reserves. These reserves should only be used for emergencies or addressing infrastructure problems i.e. street and drainage repair. When these major infrastructure problems have been addressed it is then, and only then, we can look at "wish list items" such as a new city hall or a park with bells and whistles etc., costing the taxpayers millions of dollars. We are several years away from affording these new non-essential costly items without a major tax increase. The temptation to leverage our reserves before completely addressing essential problems is very enticing to some in our community. With prudent and careful management of spending of tax dollars, these items will be considered, but not at this time.

During the last few years, the voting members of the Council have produced dramatic improvement in many areas of city life. Plans have been drawn up to address the potential dangers of flooding i.e., weather events. Recently, we have renewed the contract with our City Manager who demonstrated real positive performance over the last 2 years. He has now become the longest serving City Manager in over 20 years.

I am very optimistic about the future of Castle Hills. I hope that this steady, positive atmosphere will continue to produce many positive results. Together we cannot fail.

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The Lighting of the Lights

Sunday, December 5, 2021
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
at "The Commons"

"Merry Christmas everyone!" Mrs. Claus and I want to invite you to come see us and have your complimentary photo taken with us on Sunday, December 5th from 4pm to 6pm, courtesy of the City of Castle Hills. Each family will receive one Free 5x7 photo placed in a Santa Framed Card as a gift from the City of Castle Hills.

Santa visits will be done with socially-distanced safety of all in mind, while providing the most memorable experience possible for you and your family. Santa will be seated on his Santa Throne with a bench in front for guests to visit with Santa & Mrs. Claus while we capture the perfect holiday photo for you to enjoy.



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Castle Hills Fire Department

By Chief Jim Ladewig

Planning Ahead

The cooler weather is around the corner. Projections are that this winter will be colder than the previous winter and we all remember what occurred last year thanks to Winter Storm Uri. We should all be starting to do our normal preparations prior to heading into the winter months. The heating systems should be inspected by a license/ certified HVAC technician to ensure the systems are operating properly. If your heating systems function using natural gas, they can overtime have rust and carbon build up that will cause them to operate inefficiently. Also, these issues can cause carbon monoxide to accumulate within your home which can be fatal. Approximately 440 deaths nationally are caused by carbon monoxide poisoning each year. In addition, the natural gas supply should be checked for leaks. All homes that have any type of natural gas operating equipment should have them checked by a certified technician for these issues. Carbon monoxide detectors are required in these homes as early warning devices indicating that there is an issue with these units and that there is carbon monoxide present in the home. When these alarms go off, everyone should evacuate the home immediately and call the fire department. For those of you with fireplaces, these too should be cleaned and checked prior to lighting to ensure safe usage.

Thanks to Winter Storm Uri, there are additional items we should do in the future during our cool weather preparations. Normally these tasks would not be part of our list of things to do before the winter. You should have an ample supply of bottled water on hand

when notified of an upcoming winter storm. Candles, batteries and flashlights in case of extended power outages. Bags of salt and sand will come in handy to remove ice from surfaces so as to limit falls from slippery sidewalks and driveways. Over a million Americans are injured each year from falls on icy surfaces, resulting in over 17,000 deaths. If possible, a supply generator that could supply needed power to essential items in your home. Generators come in all sizes, from small single units that could supply a small space heater to heat a small room, keep your cell phone charged and other small appliances to a unit that can supply an entire home. It would be best to consult a professional to get the appropriate generator to fit your needs. By all means never run a generator inside a building or near an open doorway. These units will give off carbon monoxide and should be out in a well-ventilated area. Everyone stay safe and warm this winter and as always do not hesitate to contact your Castle Hills Fire Department for assistance or any questions.

Respectfully,
Chief Jim Ladewig

City of Castle Hills, Texas Garbage, Brush and Recycling Guide

The City of Castle Hills Public Works Department provides an array of sanitation services which includes 2x a week garbage pick-up, 1x a week brush/leaf collection, and 1x a week recycling collections.

These services are provided by city employees who staff the collection trucks, rather than relying on automated collection, so that residents receive personalized attention. To ensure the quality of our collection services and for the safety of our Public Works crews, the city has specific weight and size requirements that are outlined in the City of Castle Hills Ordinance Chapter 36, Solid Waste. The 32 gallon ordinance Sec. 36-30. (B) has been in the City's Municipal Codes of Ordinances since 2009.

The City of Castle Hills has provided information on the City's website regarding container sizes including different various publications, including the holiday schedule which was mailed out earlier this year. Last month, the City of Castle Hills mailed out an informational brochure, "Garbage, Brush, & Recycling Guide," which addressed container sizes.

If you have any questions or need assistance related to the City's Sanitation Service, please contact at 210.293-9676 or via email rharada@castlehills-tx.gov or Julmer@castlehills-tx.gov.



Sanitation Guide

<https://www.cityofcastlehills.com/2162/Garbage-Brush-Recycling-Guide>



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Watch Guard Body Cams



After what seems like a long time, the wait is finally over. The Watch Guard Body Cams have finally arrived and are being installed and deployed. Every officer will receive training on how to use the body cams, policy and procedure and shall be utilized by every officer that is on duty.

Currently, Officers are dependent on the patrol unit dash cam and a lapel mic, but now will be able to capture an individual point of view from each officer while making contact with a citizen. The body cam video will then be uploaded and merged with the patrol unit dash cam.

There were factors that caused the delay in the order and deployment of the body cams which began with obtaining funding. After the Crime Control Prevention District approved the funding, the order was placed which was followed with agreements and contracts. Just when we thought it was all set to go forward, the shortage of electronic components came into play which delayed the process once again just as we have seen with the shortage of motor vehicles and other consumer products.

Many of you are now watching some of our dash cam video posts on our media pages and will soon be able to see additional footage from the body cams.

Thank you to the Citizens of Castle Hills and the Crime Control Prevention District.

As always, please report any suspicious activity or crime directly to the Castle Hills Police Department Communication Center (210) 342-2341 or 911. Please refrain from reporting the suspicious activity or crime directly to the City Manager or your council member(s) as this delays the response time of police officers to your call.



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hosted by Castle Hills City Hall
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Evening in Castle Hills



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How We are Handling the Paper Shortage

Currently, paper products are in short supply and high demand. This is mainly due to labor and transportation shortages directly related to the global pandemic. In addition to paper shortages, costs for paper products have dramatically increased.



While Neighborhood News has been in business for over 25+ years, this is a first for us. Our team has come up with a plan to ensure neighbors continue to receive their community newsletter, uninterrupted. We are also working with our suppliers to ensure communities continue to receive their printed newsletters. However, we have no control over the national supply chain or the availability of paper products we need to continue newsletter printing and distribution services.

Our Plan

It is our plan to continue to print neighborhood newsletters as usual. We may use different paper types, colors, or sizes as necessary. To ensure there is no disruption in service, we wish to remind you about the option to join our e-newsletter distribution list. Residents have the option to view the most recent copy of their respective neighborhood newsletter online by signing up for the e-newsletter at: www.neighborhoodnews.com/go-green-2

We will continue to keep you posted on this situation.

For more information on paper products and production pricing, visit: <https://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag322.htm>



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