

July 2022



The Castle Hills

Reporter

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

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Friends,

Hopefully by the time you are receiving this we will have some respite from the heat and much needed rain. As you can imagine, things are always busy at the City. Below there is an update on the street and drainage improvements, safety in Castle Hills, and how the Castle Hills Community Organization has been keeping us cool!

Streets and more streets? Maybe...

In the last Reporter, I had mentioned there was talk of a petition that would require the City to take the borrowing of debt to do more street and drainage improvements to a vote in November 2022. The petition was turned in and as a result, the City was not able to proceed with the issuance of debt. Castle Hills residents and business owners have said repeatedly that our focus as a City should be streets and drainage. As your Mayor and a resident for 13 years, I agree. The last two years we have delivered on our promise to make the progress you have demanded. In that time, we have accomplished more street and drainage improvements than we have in the last 10 years combined! This would not be possible without borrowing money.

Financially speaking, it is impossible for us to make that size of investment in our infrastructure without borrowing. The good news is that by borrowing to make necessary improvements we can focus on street maintenance instead of rebuilding streets, those dollars saved can go towards the debt payments. What I just simply explained is substantiated by numerous schedules that our financial advisors and attorneys review to ensure that we are doing anything correctly and within our financial capabilities. It goes without saying but there are countless checks and balances in place. The last check and balance is the company that provides us the debt, does their due diligence to ensure that they are making a sound investment.

The question has been asked, "does this mean that my street won't get done now." As of right now, we are in a holding pattern until City Council decides to take this to a vote. I fully intend on asking City Council to consider borrowing debt so that we can continue to repair your streets and drainage. We all know that interest rates are going up and inflation hasn't slowed down either. The reality is that delays will continue to cost taxpayers more, our dollars are not going as far, and the streets will further degrade. The City has shown that we know how to successfully engineer, procure, manage, and execute construction projects; and we are ready to do more for you. All this being said, I respect the will of the Citizens to have a vote and will continue to respect your will once we have the results in November. Till then, we are focused on finishing out our remaining projects.

Burning Brush

In early June I received a late-night call from Castle Hills City Manager Ryan Rapelye regarding a controlled brush fire just outside of Castle Hills. The information we were

(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

Beth Daines

Place 5

CITY STAFF

Ryan Rapelye

City Manager, (210) 293-9673

Zina Tedford

City Secretary

(210) 293-9681

Nora Davis

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

District

3rd Monday, 5:30pm

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(Continued from page 2)

receiving from San Antonio was secondhand and the level of details didn't really give me the confidence to sleep soundly; so, I decided to go put eyes on the situation. Fire Chief Ladewig also showed up around the same time and we went to go see firsthand the location of the fire. The fire was located behind Antonian High School, along the railroad tracks; but to our surprise we noticed several massive piles of mulch and stumps. I observed the fire over the next 3 days as it continued to smolder, keeping up communication with SAFD as they continued to address the hot spots. I've come to learn that mulch fires are some of the hardest fires to fight because you can't always visibly see the smoldering. Fortunately, our partners at SAFD thoroughly extinguished the fire but the mulch and stumps remained.



On June 10th, I sent a letter (available on my Facebook or upon request) to Mayor Nirenberg, City Manager Walsh, and Councilman Bravo regarding the large piles of mulch that in my opinion presented a serious danger to the San Antonio and Castle Hills Community. Fortunately, I had an opportunity to talk to Mayor Nirenberg and he shared his support to have San Antonio Code Enforcement investigate the issue. It is my understanding that San Antonio Code Enforcement is presently investigating the issue. It is important to Castle Hills that we ensure that our immediate neighbors aren't putting our most vulnerable areas at risk. As you know, this area abuts Fox Hall area and McGimsey Boy Scout Park which with our long stretch of drought, are at great risk for fires. It pleases me to see our cities have much more collaborative relationship than in years past.

Along the lines of fires, our next campaign as a City will be reminding residents that they need to trim their low hanging branches and limbs over the street. Oak Wilt season will be over July 1st and that is the best time to address this issue. We love our trees but it is important that our fire trucks and mutual aid partners trucks are able to safely access all streets. I will be working with the Castle Hills Fire Department to put together a short Public Service Announcement (PSA) about tree trimming that shows how important it is and how our trucks have to slow down to traverse some streets in order to avoid damaging our trucks.

Uvalde

May 24th 2022 is another unfortunate date that will remain in our minds following the shooting in Uvalde. As an eternal optimist, it was and is a struggle to find the silver lining in such a tragedy. What does warm my soul is seeing the outpouring of support across the State. People across the State have stepped up to go above and beyond and do something for Uvalde. In such a dark moment, I find solace in knowing that there are so many good people amongst us.

Amongst those heroes is the Castle Hills Police Department. In talking to Chief Zuniga and Captain Waggoner about what

transpired in Uvalde, something came up and I wanted to share a few items that should give you piece of mind; while staying brief enough to not disclose anything that would compromise CHPD or our community.

First and foremost, immediately following the shooting Chief Zuniga and I talked about how we could do more for our community during a troubling time. Chief Zuniga said that CHPD would be increasing patrols of all Castle Hills schools till the end of the school year. Parents and administrators reached out and shared that this small action brought about a great deal of comfort to them and their students.

Any time that there is a situation, I always ask myself if there is something we could've done differently and if the situation didn't affect us, I ask myself how we could better prepare if it were to happen in Castle Hills. Uvalde was one of those situations. In talking to Captain Waggoner, he shared that our police cruisers are properly equipped with equipment that preliminary media reports alleged that first responders in Uvalde did not have. I was pleased to hear that our officers are well equipped.

In further conversations it was determined that additional training opportunities exist for the City of Castle Hills first responders. While it is too early to go into details, I did want to share that we are looking closely and I am fully supportive of making certain that we provide our first responders with the equipment and training that they need. I look forward to sharing more details in the upcoming *Reporter*.

Making a Splash

To date, the summer has been very hot and very dry; which is why we are all grateful that Castle Hills Community Organization put on an amazing Splash Day! People of all ages were out splashing around and cooling off. Thank you to the CHCO, the Castle Hills Fire Department, and everyone that made our Splash Day a success! As always, I captured some photos of you and your family out the Commons having a good time. Please check my Facebook to see the pictures.



If there is anything that I can do for you or your families, please do not hesitate. Stay cool!

Yours in service,

JR Treviño, Mayor
JTrevino@CastleHills-TX.Gov
 210-559-5940





MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

By Ryan D. Rapelye, City Manager

The Castle Hills City Council approved the FY 2023 Budget Calendar on June 9, 2022. The FY 2023 Budget Calendar is available on the City's website. The FY 2023 budget meetings/workshops are underway and will continue through September. The adoption of the tax rate and annual budget is scheduled for Council consideration at the September 13, 2022 meeting. The goal of these meetings is to discuss and assess community needs, priorities, City services, challenges, and opportunities as a part of the formulation of the FY 2023 Proposed Budget. The city budget document is much more than just financial numbers, it is a fiscal plan that represents the City Council's priorities which is based on estimated revenue and expenses over the next year.

Key dates related to the development of the FY 2023 Proposed Budget:

Tuesday 2 August at 6:30 PM - Special Council Meeting – #4 Budget Workshop

- City Manager submits Proposed Budget FY 2023 and files with the City Secretary (No Action Needed)
- Receive No-New-Revenue and Voter-Approval Tax Rate Calculations

Tuesday 9 August at 6:30 PM - Regular Council Meeting

- Discuss tax rate; if proposed tax rate will exceed the No-New-Revenue Rate, take record vote and Schedule Public Hearing. (Rate will not be adopted at this meeting)

Tuesday 6 September at 6:30 PM - Special Council Meeting

- Budget/Public Hearing
- Schedule and announce meeting to adopt tax rate 3-14 days from this date

Tuesday 13 September 6:30 PM - Regular Council Meeting

- Adopt Proposed Budget by Ordinance and take record vote
- Ratify the budget and take a record vote
- Adopt tax rate by Ordinance and take record vote

As City Manager, I have a number of goals to discuss in the development of the proposed budget including reviewing the City's retirement system, evaluating the compensation plan for City employees, specifically our public safety (police and fire) and additional funding for the development of a beautification program for monthly maintenance of the City's assets and ROW's in and around our community. We will also look at how to identify future projects related to the use of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and long-term improvements to the Commons. We will also discuss future major capital projects related to street and drainage as we continue to work to improve the City's infrastructure. City staff continues to monitor revenue and expenditures within our current FY 2022 Adopted Budget and we continue to see increases in revenue related to sales tax, permitting and court.

Castle Hills, like many other municipalities in the area, did not receive anticipated revenue in certain areas of the general fund in 2020 due to economic downturn, however, over the last two years we have seen a rebound and upswing in sales tax revenue through June 2022. We are close to a 10% increase in sales tax collections versus this time last year.

Current Capital Improvement Projects:

Street Improvements Phase II. Austin Bridge and Road, LP. was given the notice to proceed (NTP) on May 16, 2022. The project

has a duration time of 210 days and construction will be done in phases. Austin Bridge and Road, LP will be conducting full-depth reconstruction to Briarcliff Drive from Banyan Drive to Lockhill Selma Road; Bluet Lane from Travertine Lane to Gladiola Lane, Shalimar Drive from Cotillion Drive to Bluet Lane; and Wottlin Road from Antler Drive to Towne Vue Drive. Construction cost for Phase II is \$1 Million, which is funded from the 2020 Streets Certificates of Obligation. A detailed schedule of this project is available on the City's website.

Street Improvements Phase I capital project began in November 2021 at a cost \$1.9 million, funded from the 2020 Certificates of Obligations. The scope was to provide full depth reconstruction to create a smoother driving surface and extend the life of the pavement on various city streets. The Project involved reconstruction of over ten streets which had been identified in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). We are working to close out this project, and have developed a "punch list" to ensure that all requirements of the contract have been met.

Banyan/Carolwood Phase II drainage improvement project began in August 2021, at a cost of \$1.6 million. This was a continuation of the Banyan Phase I improvement project to alleviate flooding in this area. Phase II involved reconstruction of Banyan Drive to the Carolwood Drive Intersection, then continuing Northeast on Carolwood Drive to Banyan Drive, and the installation of drainage culverts. We are in the final stages of closing out this project, and have developed a "punch list" to ensure that all requirements of the contract have been met.



As I had mentioned in previous Reporter articles, in the Fall of 2018, the condition of the City of Castle Hills' streets was assessed. The report indicated that only 22% of the streets were in "Good Condition" – **today this number is almost 64%**. This percentage will only continue to increase once we complete Street Improvements Phase II.

The 2018 Capital Improvements Plan assessment also revealed that 50% of the streets in Castle Hills were in the "Reconstruction Category". To repair the streets in the "Reconstruction Category" was estimated to cost \$10 Million. City Council had proposed to issue Certificates of Obligations (COs) to secure funding to address the streets in the "Reconstruction Category" just as was done in 2020 but the City received a petition to require the city to place the item on the ballot for citizen vote.

The City Council and staff have worked collectively as a team with our engineers to make major strides in long-term infrastructure improvements for the betterment and safety of the citizens of Castle Hills. The transformation of Castle Hills' infrastructure has been amazing to witness and I am glad to be involved in the undertaking of these capital projects to address streets and drainage.

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. ***We are here for you, Castle Hills!***



COUNCIL COMMENTS



JOE IZBRAND

PLACE 1

Mayor Pro-Tem

Dear Neighbors,

Great communities are built on a spirit of volunteerism and a selfless dedication to helping others. In Castle Hills that spirit is thriving and, when we look around us, we see the countless ways neighbors are contributing to the betterment of our city.

As an example, the city has various boards, committees and commissions comprised of at least five residents each along with several others as alternate members. There is a Castle Hills Board of Adjustment, an Architectural Review Board, the Crime Control and Prevention District, a Parks and Projects Commission and a Zoning Commission. Its members meet regularly to deliberate substantive issues that help improve our city. A considerable amount of time is invested by the more than 35 volunteers serving on these committees.

Additionally, Castle Hills has very active community-based organizations including the Castle Hills Garden Club, Castle Hills Woman's Club, the Castle Hills Community Organization and the Castle Hills Historical Society. These groups are steered by dozens of volunteers who dedicate their time to creating seasonal events and activities that bring us closer together as neighbors.

Then, there are neighbors who make their mark in other ways, ranging from reading to our youngest residents in our public elementary schools to delivering meals to our elderly neighbors and checking on their well-being.

We all have the ability to make a difference.

In these times when it seems there is so much negative news and our social media channels are filled with vitriol, let's remember that we have the power to make a positive impact. Castle Hills is comprised of many kind and generous people who believe in our community and quietly, proactively work to make our city a great place to live.

There is room for you, too. Please consider volunteering to serve on one of our city committees, or participating in one of our community organizations, or supporting a social service organization. It makes a real difference.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service as your voice on city council. If I can be of assistance, please don't hesitate to email me at izbrandplace1@gmail.com. I also invite you to join me in discussion and the sharing of Castle Hills news at www.facebook.com/izbrandplace1.

Enjoy your summer and stay cool!

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JACK JOYCE
PLACE 4

Friends and Neighbors,

The May election is over, but nevertheless I want to take time to thank my many supporters for their invaluable help. There were so many who invited us to place our signs in their yard, while others talked to their neighbors, provided support on social media, assisted with block walking, and even provided financial assistance. It was a groundswell of support for which I am most grateful. I am delighted to continue as your councilman for a second term!

Here's what I would like to work on in this term:

- Continue to get streets and drainage issues addressed, in a fiscally responsible manner. Happily the street repair and maintenance sales tax of one-quarter of one percent was overwhelmingly approved by voters so with that 20% of the revenue from the electronic signs, we can continue to do the light street repairs. But the more costly needs, such as those streets which require the full-depth reconstruction, or the drainage projects, will have to be held off until we can borrow more money. Unfortunately, this won't be until November at the earliest, due to a petition submitted by Kim Wynn and Lesley Wenger that was signed by fewer than a majority of our citizens.
- Monitor and adjust staff packages as needed. In the post-pandemic world, we are in a very competitive environment for staff members, especially police officers. The police and fire departments are the pride and joy of our City, and we need to keep it that way, even if it costs more than we have been traditionally paying, always within a balanced budget.
- Complete the writing of the Comprehensive Plan document and present a summary to citizens and then to Council to help determine what our top priorities are. If you would like to review the ideas and progress to date, please go to this link on the City of Castle Hills website: CH-Comp-Plan (cityofcastlehills.com).
- Conduct a review of our codes and ordinances.

- Continue to build interest and membership in the Castle Hills Business Association.
- Gather the non-profit organizations in the city to discuss how we can help one another.

I would be happy to hear from you with your ideas of what we can do to improve our city.

Please try to attend one or more of the Council budget meetings, as they will provide great insight into the make-up of our City's budget. The schedule should be posted at City Hall and on the City's website. Final approval takes place in September.

Have a great summer!

Jack Joyce

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



BETH DAINES
PLACE 5

I am honored and excited to be your newly elected Alderman. Thank you all for your support and for sharing your ideas and concerns and for voting. I'm proud to live in a city where so many of our residents are involved and take the time to make their choices heard through their vote. I will do my best to represent each of you.

I am becoming acquainted with the rules and standards of the meetings, have taken two online training courses through the State Attorney General's office, have met with our city attorney, Marc Schnall, for a crash course in city government, and am signed up to take the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) course for newly elected officials. Castle Hills has a Council-City Manager form of government, according to the Texas Local Government Code. So as Aldermen, we are responsible for supervising the City Manager, as well as reviewing and approving the city budget. The 2023 budget meetings will start up in June and run through the summer. We will have a community meeting regarding the budget and all who are interested are encouraged to attend.

Castle Hills is a wonderful place to live. We have enviable lots and beautiful trees, an amazing Police Department and Fire Department, top notch city services, a hardworking Council and Mayor, an effective City Manager, and great neighbors. Working to make Castle Hills a more family-friendly city by creating small pocket parks or working with community partners to find spaces for playgrounds and walking paths is a priority of mine. The city doesn't own much vacant land, so creativity is key in finding space. In this regard, suggested improvements to the Commons, such as a play area, a sports court, or a splash pad have been mentioned.

Living in this city has given my children and family a safe and diverse place to live. As I strive to represent all the residents in Castle Hills, please reach out to share any thoughts and ideas you might have.

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WHEN: Saturday, October 15, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Please provide proof of address (i.e., utility bill or driver's license)

WHERE: 209 Lemonwood Dr. (City team will be on-site to assist)



Accepted Materials:

Shrubs/Tree Branches/Woody Vines/Other
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BBQ Grills (without compressed gas tanks)
Carpeting
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Materials NOT Accepted:

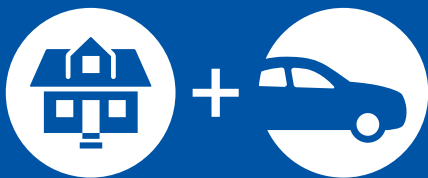
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SAVE THE DATE!

National Night Out

OCTOBER 4, 2022

More details to follow...



City of Castle Hills will be hosting a paper shredding event on **Saturday, October 8, 2022** at City Hall, 209 Lemonwood Drive from 9 a.m. – 12 noon or until the truck reaches capacity.

Identity theft and fraud crimes continue to be of great concern for all of us. The City of Castle Hills would like to help you avoid becoming a victim of identity theft and fraud, by keeping your personal information away from the hands of identity thieves. One of the methods identity thieves use to steal your information is combing through recycling and garbage for sensitive information that has been thrown away.

For this reason, the City of Castle Hills recommends and encourages citizens to use a shredder (preferably cross-cut) for sensitive documents, such as credit card statements, financial statements, pre-approved credit card offers, old IRS tax forms, bank checks, household bills, and other documents that may contain sensitive information.

Community Shred event will be on site with one commercial-sized shredding truck for this event. Items no larger than staples and paper clips may be attached to the papers. Because of the popularity of this event each vehicle will only be allowed eight (8) standard size Banker style boxes of documents to be shredded.

This event is not for business documents. It is for personal documents only that contain personal information that if thrown out could lead to identity theft.

Service will be on a first come, first served basis and limited to the capacity of the commercial-sized shredding truck. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause should the capacity be reached.

STAY SAFE IN THE SUMMER HEAT

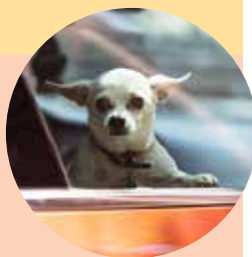
Never Leave Your Child or Pet Alone in a Car



Don't risk your child's life by leaving them in the car alone during hot weather. A child's body can heat up five times faster than an adult's, and even in cooler weather, cars can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly. On a mild day, the temperature inside a car can rise 20 degrees above the outside temperature in just 10 minutes or less! Here are tips to help keep your child safe this summer:

- Make a habit of checking your vehicle before leaving it. **Look before you lock!**
- Keep a stuffed animal or other objects next to you in the car as a reminder that your child is with you.
- If you ever see a child left alone in a car, **call 9-1-1 immediately!**

Pets can get dehydrated quickly. Make sure you take precautions to keep your pet safe.



- Give your pet plenty of water when it's hot outdoors. Make sure to fill their water bowl before you leave.
- Make sure they have a shady place to get out of the sun.
- Be careful not to over-exercise your pet. Too much playtime in the hot sun is dangerous for them.
- Hot asphalt and tar can burn sensitive paw pads, walk your pet on grass or dirt when possible.
- Keep your pet indoors when it's extremely hot outside.
- **Never leave your pet in a car!** Pets can overheat in minutes so don't put them at risk! Leave them home during hot weather.

Crime Prevention Tip LOCK, TAKE, HIDE

One of the easiest ways to prevent becoming a crime victim is to lock your car doors. Leaving cars unlocked in your driveway allows easy access to see what can be stolen. Please keep the crime tip of **LOCK, TAKE, HIDE** in mind. Lock, Take, and Hide is an easy 3-step plan that drastically reduces your chances of becoming a victim:

1. **Lock** your car doors.
2. **Take** your keys and valuables with you. (This includes cell phones, wallets/purses, GPS units, computers, weapons, and jewelry).
3. **Hide** those valuables so they aren't in plain sight.



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Published and distributed by:

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