

March 2016

FIESTA 2016

Castle Hills

Family Fun

At "The Commons"
on the corner of Lemonwood &
Honeysuckle, next to City Hall

SAT. APRIL 16, 2016

8:00 AM Fiesta 5K Fun Run/Walk

10:00 AM Community Parade

11:00 AM Food Booths
— 5:00 PM Arts & Crafts

3:30 PM Pooch Parade

LIVE MUSIC
KIDS AREA

Fiesta Medals

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: www.fiestacastlehills.org

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Message From the Mayor

Early voting for the Primary elections has just concluded. I hope that you found the time to be a part of the solution by voting and selecting representatives who will guide our county, state and country in a positive direction. If you are not registered to vote, please pick up a voter registration application from city hall. The deadline to register to vote for the May 7th election is April 7th, and your vote is very important for the future of Castle Hills.



*Tim Howell
Mayor*

On the Castle Hills ballot for the May 7th election are three city council seats and two propositions. **Proposition 1** will decide whether the VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority continues in the City of Castle Hills. If voters choose to discontinue VIA services in Castle Hills, then **Proposition 2** will be a decision on whether to authorize the creation of a City of Castle Hills Municipal Development District (MDD) and impose a sales and use tax at the rate of one-half of one percent for the purpose of financing development projects beneficial to the district. Proposition 2 would not create a "new" or "additional" tax, but would replace the current sales and use tax now collected for VIA services.

These propositions are of sufficient magnitude that the State of Texas requires them to be decided by the will of the people through a special election, rather than simply left to the authority of the city council. I strongly encourage you to learn as much as you can about the issues. Do you know who this will impact? How are they impacted? What are the possible long-term consequences for the future of Castle Hills? How could this impact you personally?

If Proposition 2 passes, the sales and use tax collected for the MDD could be directed to fund targeted infrastructure projects. The council has made tremendous strides with the development of long-term plans to address our street and drainage deficiencies. The annual city budgets are carefully scrutinized to squeeze every available penny from the city budget allowing more funds to be allocated to streets and drainage. I extend my thanks to the city council for their hard work, insightful lively discussions, and the passage of agenda items related to streets and drainage concerns.

Thank you, the voters, who take time to consider the candidates, learn about the propositions and cast your vote. I leave you with a quote from Teddy Roosevelt – 26th President of the United States: "Should things go wrong at any time, the people will set them to rights by the peaceable exercise of their elective rights." Please be part of this process.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the Annual Fiesta Parade and activities on April 16th. I encourage you to stop by the Commons to enjoy the fellowship of your neighbors, support the vendors, partake of a variety of delicious foods, and be a part of Fiesta 2016 Castle Hills' style!

Timothy A Howell

Mayor City of Castle Hills Texas
210 535 9094
Mayortimhowell@gmail.com

CITY COUNCIL

Tim Howell
Mayor

Lesley Wenger
Place 1

Matthew Daggett
Place 2

John Squire
Place 3

Frank Paul
Place 4, Mayor Pro Tem

Douglas Gregory
Place 5, Treasurer

CITY STAFF
(210) 342-2341

Diane Pfeil
City Manager, ext. 214

Kymberlee Buntyn
City Secretary, ext. 216

Suzanne Riley
Finance, ext. 224

Jerry Riedel
Fire Department Chief, ext. 217

Wayne Davis
Police Department Chief, ext. 210

Rick Harada
Public Works & Animal Control
Department Director, ext. 206

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 Tuesday, 6:30pm

Architectural Review Committee
3rd Monday, 7:00pm
Upon Request

Board of Adjustment
3rd Wednesday, 7:00pm
Upon Request

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

Crime Control & Prevention District
3rd Monday, 5:30pm
As Needed

OUR CITY'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

By Diane Pfeil, City Manager

Are they our city's first line of defense or one of our unsung heroes? I will let you decide. The city has a Dispatch department, open 24/7, 365 days a year. Our dispatch personnel have over forty-five (45) years of combined service among them. Multi-tasking is an understatement for the dispatch department. This all-important department is an integral part of the communications for the city, in other words, the hub of our city.

Dispatch personnel are the first point of contact between emergency services, or first responders and the public. Emergency (911) calls come directly to our city.

No day is routine. One call may be a minor traffic accident and the next a frantic resident calling for assistance. Callers can be frightened or excited and not able to provide the proper information. Other times, the caller may become angry or abusive. Through it all, personnel must remain focused and in control of the situation. Our Castle Hills Dispatchers monitor not only our emergency services radio transmissions, but also San Antonio Police Department radio traffic carefully listening for events that might affect our city. If there is a bank robbery on the edge of our city, dispatch must alert our patrol officers of a possible pursuit through our city.

Dispatchers must recognize the sound of a patrol officer's voice, know every street whether it is in the city of Castle Hills or surrounding San Antonio and know the residents. Dispatchers greet visitors entering city hall, answer all telephone calls incoming to the city (both emergency and non-emergency), and monitor emergency services radio traffic.

To work in dispatch each employee must be certified through the State of Texas, complete required continuing education, and have telecommunicator Spanish to allow them to assess the situation and determine what services are needed.

Personnel must decipher what the caller is saying, and activate the services necessary to respond to the nature of the call. During the different radio transmissions, dispatchers must be mindful of many things including the safety of the officer, possible direction of travel for a suspect on the run, the need for medical services to respond to a scene, the safety of the caller, weather

conditions, and the location of possible victims just to name a few. So many unanswered questions run through their minds, yet, through proper training these professionals remain focused on tracking the incoming information. All of this is done without actual "eyes" on the situation at hand.

I remember listening to the calls from the Wedgwood fire and being amazed at the composure under fire that our dispatchers displayed for not one, but hundreds of calls. Unlike most calls for police or fire services, the Wedgwood fire rescue efforts lasted for hours and the incoming calls during recovery from displaced Wedgwood residents, concerned family, and friends lasted for weeks.

It's all in a day's work. Keeping track of field units, complaints and incidents; querying databases; receiving requests for services; receiving, evaluating, and summarizing complaints prior to dispatching information; recording stolen property, missing persons, and stolen vehicles into national database are only a few of the duties of dispatch. On behalf of the citizens and visitors to Castle Hills, I extend my thanks and utmost respect to our dispatch professionals.

On another note, spring is here and activities around the city will kick in high gear. The CHCO is hosting the Annual Easter Egg Hunt in the Commons on Saturday, March 26th. Fiesta Castle Hills will be held on Saturday, April 16 and is our time to celebrate in our city!

Our family, here at city hall, wishes you and your family a wonderful spring season, filled with plentiful rain, beautiful flowers and good health!



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Council Comments



Lesley Wenger,
Place 1

VIA on the May Ballot

On February 2nd City Council voted unanimously to place the issue of whether or not to keep VIA in Castle Hills on this May's ballot. In response to e-mails I have sent, updating citizens on the progress, one ongoing concern has been the service provided to the disabled, known as "VIATrans".

Because of VIA's actions with other cities who have pulled out of VIA—known as "withdrawn units"—the Texas Legislature passed an ongoing requirement for "VIATrans" effective June 2011. You can look this up in the Government Code V.T.C.A., Transportation Code 451.6101.

The revision states that cities who withdraw from VIA will provide an alternate form of transportation for disabled persons, or VIA will be required to continue to provide "VIATrans" service to any such person who "resides in a withdrawn unit of election and meets the eligibility criteria established by the authority for demand-responsive transportation service for persons with (proven) disabilities...who have applied to the program before January 1, 2012."

In the event that the withdrawing city does not provide an alternate form of transportation for disabled persons, the withdrawn city must reimburse VIA for cost of those services which VIA is now required by law to continue providing.

There are some limitations on VIA's service to the disabled, and those continue. The service is provided to:

- A participant's workplace or place where he/she is seeking employment
- Doctor's office
- Pharmacy
- Voting place
- Grocery store within five miles of participant's residence
- A government building
- Participants" who choose to visit a residence within VIA's service area or to a residence in a "withdrawn unit" where a disabled person resides.

Several alternate forms of service have been looked into by Councilmembers during the over two years the VIA issue has been debated. The hope is that an alternate service would be superior to "VIATrans" but no concrete arrangement has been made because the companies we have had conversations with would like to know if there is a real possibility of their providing such service before compiling a prospectus.

However, there is another option: the city could contract with Uber, Lyft or Get-Me to provide reduced fares for disabled persons in Castle Hills.

Therefore, I will be placing an item on the Agenda for the March 8th Council Meeting that one or more of the ride-hailing companies be invited to the meeting and that Council vote to negotiate with them for service to the disabled—in the event that citizens vote to discontinue VIA service in Castle Hills.

Please let me know if you have any questions: (210) 377-3636 or wengertx@satx.rr.com

"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."

ANNIVERSARIES AND NEW EMPLOYEES

35 Years

Harold DeHart – Fire Department

5 – Years

Joe Prado, Public Works

New Employees

Raymond Madrid, Police Department

Nathan Alcala, Police Department

Hector Hernandez, Fire Department

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Matthew Daggett,
Place 2

This spring three council seats are up for election and two items related to a half percent (.5%) of sales tax currently collected in Castle Hills. The first ballot item, Proposition 1 is consideration to keep or cease VIA transportation services in Castle Hills. If the residents vote to withdraw from VIA, Proposition 2 authorizes the creation of a Municipal Development District that would utilize the .5% of sales tax dollars collected in Castle Hills to finance development projects such as street and drainage infrastructure.

I encourage you to weigh the pros and cons of both sides of the issues and make an informed decision, knowing the facts. There will be implications if we withdraw from VIA, and there will be implications if we stay with VIA. Our city has great drainage and street needs with limited new sources of income. Our citizens will have the responsibility of choosing to keep a social service such as VIA or use that money to pay for infrastructure and then deal with the implications of not having public transportation. It will be good to finally put this issue behind us. The election in May will provide clear direction through the will of the voters, so we can continue to move forward in making our city a great place to live. As always call me with any questions or ideas 210-849-6209.

Thanks,

Respectfully,

Matthew Daggett
City Council, Place 2
mdaggett@cityofcastlehills.com



John Squire,
PLACE 3

As we move into 2016, I see another year of progress and improvements happening within our city. It is obvious to me that Castle Hills is a great community. We have many new families and businesses continuing to move into and support our city. Driving factors are our wonderful neighbors, our City's convenient location, its premier services; which includes public works, fire, and police, and our beautiful homes.

We are at the point of finalizing our first city wide comprehensive drainage study. Our drainage problems have now been extensively detailed. With this information, we can work to help mitigate the problems of property damage caused by stormwater runoff.

As I communicated in my last newsletter, we made substantial progress on maintaining and repairing many of our streets and this process is continuing. At the February council meeting, the contractor and project was approved for the second set of streets to be resurfaced. This will also include repair and replacement of the associated failing water and sewer lines. An inter-local agreement with SAWS was also approved, which will allow our City to maintain better control of this project. Unfortunately, there will still be inconveniences to the affected residents as this project moves forward. City staff is working to make sure residents and businesses are informed of the work ahead of time. Alternate route access will be initiated while the work is taking place.

Finally, I do believe and support getting the work done to repair the water and sewer lines. Doing this in conjunction with the resurfacing of our city streets will help to minimize the impact as we continue this process.

I am available to discuss our City's issues and encourage you to keep in touch. Please contact me at:

email address – jsquire@cityofcastlehills.com or
phone – 210-390-4611

Respectfully,
John Squire

Suzette Strong

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go green

LET'S DO OUR PART IN HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT!

We are proud to announce we are now offering YOU to "opt-in" to having your Neighborhood Newsletter delivered electronically!

HOW?

- 1 Visit www.NeighborhoodNews.com
- 2 Click on: "Let's do our part" and follow the instructions.

What will change?

Well... nothing! Your address will be removed from the mailing list and a digital copy will be emailed to you within the next couple of issues.

We are so pleased to be offering this new service!

Questions? Feel free to contact Neighborhood News at (210) 558-3160 with any website-related questions.



Frank Paul,
PLACE 4

RAIN SLEET OR SNOW, WHO KEEPS ON THE GO? Yes, the U.S. Postal system and the Castle Hills Public Works Department. These are the city employees who brave the elements to ensure that trash, brush, leaves, recycling, and discarded household items are removed from your curbside for legal and efficient disposal. Pot hole on your drive? Just notify Public Works and they will risk their lives to stand in the street and make the needed repairs. Street sign suddenly disappears? Call Public Works and a new sign will be ordered and replaced as soon as possible. Loose dog in your yard or roaming your neighborhood? The animal control officers in Public Works will assist in corralling the canine for return to their owners. Found a stray? Public Works helps to find it a loving new home. When storms are approaching, Public Works ensures that barricades are available for areas that are inundated with stormwater runoff. If drainage areas are blocked by debris, it is Public Works that braves the storm to remove debris to allow the stormwater to pass.

Public Works staff are also responsible for landscape maintenance on city properties, decorating the Commons for the holidays, and assisting with building maintenance of city facilities. These jobs require diverse knowledge spanning from obtaining a commercial driver's license, operation of a tractor/front end loader, engine repair, animal control certification and many other technical skills.

Public Works staff serve as an extra set of eyes keeping watch on Castle Hills. They drive the streets and alleys, they know many of the residents, and they report suspicious vehicles, persons and activity. As you can see, your Castle Hills Public Works Department is truly a valuable asset to our City. Thank you, Rick Harada, and your outstanding staff!

Frank Paul
City Council, Place 4
fpaul@cityofcastlehills.com



Shop **CASTLE HILLS NEW BUSINESSES**

Team Soccer Galaxy - Retail

WPCS International, Inc. - Security

Pollo Tropical - Restaurant

Regus #3660 - Facility Management

Green Apple Home Care - Home Health Care



Douglas Gregory,
PLACE 5

During the last two years, Castle Hills has experienced dramatic improvement in addressing long festering problems. After two failed bond elections (the second losing by over 80%), people demanded sound policy decisions and to address street/drainage problems. Over the last two years, around \$3.5 million has/is being spent on street/drainage repairs. In fact, the City recently agreed to partner with SAWS (San Antonio Water System) to address major problems on eight City streets. Castle Hills put up over \$600,000 while SAWS contributed over \$2 million. Six hundred thousand dollars leveraged a project totaling over \$2.6 million! As Chairman of the Digital Sign Committee, I along with Councilmember Paul, City Attorney Brenan and City Manager Pfeil, hammered out a contract with Clear Channel Communications that will provide a new stream of revenue in excess of \$200,000 every year for the next several decades, for a total of at least \$4 million.

During my term as Chairman of the Drainage Committee, the City has for the first time a complete Master Plan for our drainage situation and can begin logical long term needed infrastructure improvements whenever the money can be found.

Due to new interest by developers in Castle Hills, we must carefully address their proposals. Realizing that Castle Hills has become a valuable target City for developers, thoughtless hit or miss development can bring more long term problems than short term benefits. With this understanding, a new revised Master Plan for the City as a whole is being drawn up. This Plan should benefit homeowners and developers. The developer does not really care about the long term effect of their development on our City; that is my concern and a primary purpose of a new Castle Hills Master Plan. Indiscriminate growth has no place in our City. Thoughtful planning must be invested in every development.

So there you have it. The last two years have seen a remarkable positive reversal of fortune in our City. Millions are being directed toward street/infrastructure repair. A brand new revenue stream of millions of dollars has been developed. Thoughtful Master Plans for both the City and Drainage has or are being drawn up. I am proud to bring this report to you, my Neighbors. The future is bright. Let us continue to build on this outstanding progress.

Respectfully,
Councilman Gregory

WE STOP LEAKS

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COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



January 12, 2016 – Regular City Council Meeting

- Presented a Resolution in memoriam of Dr. Lundblade.
- Presented a Resolution for Captain Richard Sill's Retirement.
- Denied the zoning petition for 212 Lemonwood Drive.
- Approval of Ordinance No.2016-01-12 Traffic and Vehicles, prohibiting parking on certain streets.
- Approved Ordinance No.2016-01-12B Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places, Working the Right of Way.
- Approved the replat and subdivision plat for 101 Hibiscus.
- Approved Ordinance No.2016-01-12 A Vegetation, other trees.
- Approval of a Resolution No.R2016-01-12, 2015 Certified Tax Roll.

February 2, 2016 – Special City Council Meeting

- Approved Ordinance No.2016-02-02, calling a Special Election for May 7, 2016, considers a proposition to decide whether VIA will continue in the City of Castle Hills, TX.

February 9, 2016 – Regular City Council Meeting

- Announcement of City Council Meetings streaming live on USTREAM.TV.COM
- Introduced New Employee Hector Hernandez
- Introduced New Fire Lieutenant Curtis Covey
- Introduced New Fire Captain Darrell Dover
- Presented National Night Out Participant Awards
- Approved formal Invitation for Bid; Phase 2 of the Street Maintenance Project.
- Approved Resolution No.R2016-02-09, authorizing the City Manager to execute an Interlocal Agreement with San Antonio Water System to facilitate Castle Hills improvement of streets and infrastructure.
- Approved Self Contained Breathing Apparatus for the Fire Department.
- Approved Ordinance No.2016-02-09, calling a General Election for May 7, 2016, to elect three Aldermen.
- Approved Ordinance No.2016-02-09A Vegetation, other trees.
- The City Manager updated the Council on the updates on Phase II of the Master Drainage Plan. Areas of concern are Lemonwood, Fox Hall, Travertine and Atwater.

Did you know that there are
VA Benefits that can help
offset the cost of living in a
retirement community or
assisted living?



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session on the Veteran's Aid &
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10:00am**

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HOME SECURITY



With Spring almost here and Summer not far behind, changes are coming. Many of these changes include warmer weather (thanks to El Nino), home improvement projects, family gatherings, and vacations to name just a few. In addition to these simple pleasures, summer historically brings increases in crime, particularly residential burglaries and thefts. The increase is often a direct result of windows or doors being left open/unsecured, and folks traveling. Now is the time to focus on home security. In an effort to combat these opportunistic crimes (aptly named as most criminals will identify evidence of an empty residence prior to making entry or committing a theft). The following crime prevention tips can reduce your risk of being targeted:

- **Secure your home/garage, and toys/tools, even on short trips to the hardware store or for groceries**

- Close your garage door if you are not in the yard and cannot see the garage door.
- Use window stops when windows are open to prevent the window from opening completely and giving a criminal an entry point into the home.
- Do not advertise items in your garage or outbuilding by leaving doors open unnecessarily or equipment lying around.
- Secure lawn equipment and/or any other gardening tools when not in use.

- **Notify a friend/family member/neighbor of your plans to travel**

- Have someone pickup mail and/or newspapers.
- Place various lights on timers and stagger the timers.
- Identify/photograph and secure valuables (obtain serial numbers where applicable).

- **Notify the police department of plans to travel**

- Call 342-2341 and request a House Check when traveling.

- **Yard maintenance**

- Remove or trim unnecessary shrubbery or debris from doors and windows to remove hiding places.
- Keep lawn well groomed and devoid of weeds.

- **Avoid leaving contractors/landscapers alone at your residence**

Lastly, warmer weather is often a catalyst for more pedestrian traffic. That said, this is a friendly reminder to please obey all traffic laws for everyone's benefit. When out for a walk, always walk facing traffic. When riding your bicycle the law requires you ride with traffic.

For extra peace of mind, you can schedule a home security survey with the Castle Hills Police Department. Officer Singleton is a certified home security inspector who will gladly meet with you at your home and review your security hardware and make recommendations to improve your home security.

Enjoy the warm beautiful days. Have a safe, happy, and secure Spring!

Johnny Siemens
Captain, Castle Hills Police Department



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The NFPA offers the following grilling safety tips:

Fire in the grill, under hot dogs and burgers, is a welcome sight at the family cookout. But fire anywhere else can make your summer kick-off barbecue memorable for all the wrong reasons. To keep you and your family safe while grilling, follow these general guidelines:



- Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose using a brush or spray bottle.
- Turn the propane tank on. If there is a gas leak, the propane will release bubbles around the hose (big enough to see).
- If there are no bubbles, your grill is safe to use. If there are bubbles, turn off the tank and check connections, then have your grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak doesn't stop, call the fire department immediately.

General grilling tips

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.

Propane grills - Before you use your grill:

- Check the major connection points between the gas (propane) tank hose and the regulator and cylinder, and where the hose connects to the burners. Tighten if loose.
- Check the gas (propane) tank hose for potential (gas) leaks. To do that:

When the grill is on:

- As you are cooking, if you smell gas, turn off the gas tank and burners.
- If the leak stops immediately, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
- If the smell continues, move away from the grill and call the fire department immediately. Do not move the grill.

Charcoal grills

- There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.
- For these and other fire safety tips go to www.NFPA.org.

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LEAVES ALL YEAR ROUND

During the year, the residential collection of leaves are restricted to 10 bags per week, no larger than 30 gallons each, to be collected on Monday for residents South of Loop 410 and Tuesday for residents North of Loop 410.

Bags cannot exceed 30 gallons each and may not be placed at the curb or in the alley prior to the Saturday before collection.

Residents, who wish to have more than 10 leaf bags collected at any time, should contact public works to arrange for this additional service. The cost for the additional service is determined by the Public Works Director based on the number and weight of bags.

Brush pick-up is on Wednesdays (citywide). No leaf bags are picked up with brush.



Shweiki



Recycling is collected once a week at your regular trash curbside or alley location. If your family is large and dedicated to recycling, a trash can (not larger than 30 gallons) clearly marked "Recycle" can be used instead of the smaller recycling bin. Recycling pick up for South of Loop 410 is Wednesday, and North of Loop 410 is Thursday. All recycling must be placed out for collection before 7 a.m. There have been a few instances when the city was not able to enter the alley because of a utility truck blocking the alley, then recyclables will be collected on the next regular trash service day.

Please do not place household trash, building materials, or pet feces in the recycling bin. The Public Works employees do not separate items in the bin. If there are items mixed with recyclables we will dispose of all items in the bin with your regular garbage. Please visit the website for the list of acceptable recyclable items at: www.cityofcastlehills.com. Recycling that is contaminated with non-recyclable items will not be permitted for recycling at the landfill and the city will not be credited with the load. When the city recycles, the fees credited to the city help to offset the landfill fees and help keep your trash service fees from increasing.

Thanks for helping to recycle when possible, limiting your bags of leaves to 10, and placing trash, leaves, and brush out for collection on the proper collection days.

Your Public Works Department



PET LAWS



Leash Law

Please be reminded that a dog must be under proper restraint at all times if not on the owner's premises. Although cats and fowl shall be exempted from the leash requirement while on the premises of the owner, any cat or fowl straying on the property of anyone except its owner shall be deemed a nuisance animal and will be subject to impoundment and fines.

Pooper Scooper Law

Be a responsible pet owner. When walking your dog, carry the appropriate materials to pick up and remove waste immediately.

Registration Required

Are your pets current on their vaccinations? All domestic pets in Castle Hills must be registered with the City. Registration is only \$10. Please bring proof of current rabies vaccination for each pet.

For the safety of the community and the animals that live with us, please keep animals vaccinated for rabies, contained from running at large, and registered with the city. For those residents who do not take these steps, the city code provides for fines related to animal violations. The code also limits the number of dogs and cats at four per household. Pet owners are encouraged to spay/neuter and microchip pets. Thank you for being responsible pet owners.

Rick Harada

Director of Public Works



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Fiesta Castle Hills – *Bringing Our Community Together for a Day of Fitness, Festivities, Food, and Fun!*

The 7th Annual Fiesta Castle Hills will be on Saturday, April 16, 2016. This family-friendly event grows more popular every year, is hosted at the Commons and features:

- 5K Fun Run/Walk at 8:00 a.m.;
- Community Parade at 10:00 a.m.;
- Fiesta Celebration from 11:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Enjoy children's activities, music, food, arts and crafts and community booths;
- Pooch Parade at 3:30 p.m.

Admission and parking are free. For more information, visit fiestacastlehills.org or call (210) 570-8654. Fiesta medals are available at city hall or at Fiesta for \$5.00.

Time to Check Vegetation

Spring time brings lots of new growth to area trees and bushes. Please check your vegetation to ensure that bushes and trees are not growing into the roadways or alleys. It is especially important that trees have a minimum of 12 feet of vertical clearance to confirm that emergency vehicles (fire trucks) can safely pass under trees growing over the roads and even the alleys.

During the warm weather street repairs are beginning across Castle Hills and the street repair equipment requires 12 feet of vertical clearance for safe operation. Trees that are not compliant during street work will be trimmed by Castle Hills Public Works personnel which results in a code violation, and abatement fees. (City Code Section 48-137 Height and placement restrictions).

Be sure to get the necessary permits before trimming your own trees or hiring someone to trim trees for you. There is active oak wilt in Castle Hills. Protect your trees by ensuring that all cuts and wounds to trees are painted with opaque paint to help prevent the spread of oak wilt. Trees provide shade helping to reduce your energy bills, slow rainwater runoff reducing erosion and flooding, provide esthetic beauty to our city, and trees increase your property values. These and the fact that the prevention of oak wilt is mandated by city code should provide incentives to protect the beautiful tree canopy that graces our city.

Mosquitoes in the News



Mosquitoes have been around for millions of years and are probably never going to be eradicated, but by following a few simple steps you can reduce their breeding sites.

- Change the water in your bird baths every other day;
- Remove lawn cuttings and leaves from storm drains and natural drainage areas that prevents water from flowing and harbors perfect breeding conditions for mosquitoes;
- Fill in low lying areas in your yard with top soil to eliminate places for moisture to collect;
- Clean roof gutters often to keep them free of damp leaves and twigs;
- Turn compost frequently to reduce areas of organic matter which provide a food source for mosquito larvae;
- Dump all standing water every other day including pet dishes, flower pot saucers, wheelbarrows, wading pools, pool covers, empty flower pots, tires stored outside, and if possible drill holes for drainage on items which often have standing water;
- Repair leaky faucets as mosquitoes can breed in damp areas where the leak drips;
- Drain all standing water from abandoned swimming pools, routinely add commercial mosquito control dunks, or add larvae eating fish such as *Gambusia affinis*.

Use mosquito repellent containing DEET when outside (day or night). For additional information on controlling mosquitoes and avoiding mosquito bites visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/stopmosquitoes/>

SHELFIES

During the holiday season, Gessner Engineering sponsored a “Shelfie Contest” with cut-out characters that could be photographed in various locations. Each photograph submitted was an entry into a drawing. City staff enjoyed posing the “Shelfies” in police vehicles, at the holiday tree in the Commons, being rescued by the Castle Hills Fire Department with the ladder truck, and many more fun locations.

The City of Castle Hills received a \$500.00 check from Gessner Engineering in College Station when Castle Hills was selected in the drawing. Staff extends our thank you to Gessner Engineering for adding cheer during the holidays and with the generous prize. The check was presented by City Manager Diane Pfeil to Public Works Director Rick Harada as a donation to the Castle Hills Animal Shelter. The Animal Shelter is funded with donations and the check from Gessner Engineering is greatly appreciated.



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YOUR COMMUNITY



Municipal Court Judge Briseno administers the Oath of Office to Officer Raymond Madrid who recently joined the Castle Hills Police Department.



At the February City Council meeting the Mayor, City Council and Chief Riedel recognized fire fighter Darrell Dover for his promotion to Fire Captain.



Hector Hernandez is introduced by Chief Riedel and Mayor Howell as a newly hired fire fighter at the February City Council meeting.



Castle Hills Embroidery located at 2211 NW Military Highway, Suite 121 celebrated their Grand Opening with a ribbon cutting. The Castle Hills Woman's Club, elected officials, and city staff joined in welcoming the new business to the city.



Residents who hosted National Night Out parties on October were recognized for their support of crime prevention and the community by Mayor Howell, City Manager Pfeil, and Captain Siemens at the February City Council meeting.

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Info@NeighborhoodNews.com www.NeighborhoodNews.com

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