

November 2017



The Castle Hills

Reporter

LIGHTING *of* the LIGHTS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5th

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Message From the Mayor



*Tim Howell
Mayor*

Every two years the Texas Legislature meets to consider potential legislative changes. The political wrangling begins in late spring and at the end of the session new laws are on the books. Many of these laws directly impact municipalities. It is a huge task for municipalities to track potential legislation, follow the outcomes and change local policies and procedures to reflect those of the State. Castle Hills, like most municipalities in Texas, belongs to the Texas Municipal League (TML). TML represents 1,155 cities across Texas with legal guidance on municipal matters, represents the interest of cities at the state and federal levels on municipal legislative matters, and provides educational opportunities to keep cities current on new laws, judicial rulings, and policy matters.

Castle Hills city staff works with TML to ensure we are aware of legislative changes and to keep city codes and policies contemporary and legal. Castle Hills peace officers and fire fighters attend mandatory legislative update training, and then amend their Standard Operating Procedures as needed. Staff participates in webinars and attends specialize training.

“Staying in the know” with laws, administrative codes, federal regulatory statutes is a monumental task. The staff at the city strives to be “in the know”. When there is doubt about the application of a law, code or statute staff seeks advice from legal counsel at TML and the city attorneys. The staff at city hall works with intensity to provide the best knowledgeable service to you, the citizens. If you have a question, staff is ready to assist. If your situation is unique or complex, staff will seek out the proper legal answer. If you have a question or concern, please reach out to the staff for their assistance. Go to the people who truly are “in the know”.

Unfortunately, there is not enough space in this article for me to individually list each staff member who make up the team of dedicated Castle Hills employees. But know that our team is top notch. Thank you to all members of the Castle Hills team! Your service to the community is outstanding and I appreciate your professionalism and hard work.

Cheryl and I wish you and your family a holiday season filled with memorable moments. We are eager to welcome in the New Year and all the opportunities that 2018 holds for each of us. As a final thought in the words of Mahatma Gandhi – “Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

Timothy A. Howell

Mayor City of Castle Hills Texas

210-535-9094

mayortimhowell@gmail.com

CITY COUNCIL

Tim Howell
Mayor

JR Treviño
Mayor Pro Tem
Place 1

Maretta Scott
Place 2

Amy McLin
Place 3

Frank Paul
Place 4

Douglas Gregory
Place 5, Treasurer

CITY STAFF

Curt Van De Walle
City Manager, (210) 293-9673

Minerva Gonzales
City Secretary, (210) 293-9681

TBD
Finance, (210) 293-9674

Darrell Dover
Fire Department Chief
(210) 342-2341, ext. 217

Wayne Davis
Police Department Chief
(210) 342-2341

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

ALL EMERGENCIES, EMT, FIRE &
POLICE CALL 911

Non-emergency (210) 342-2341

Monthly Meetings
All meetings are held at
City Hall unless otherwise posted.

City Council
2nd and 4th 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
As Needed



CODE OF CONDUCT

By Curt Van De Walle, City Manager

When I was in the military, there was a Code of Conduct that governed my actions. It began with Article I, "I am an American, fighting in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense." The Code ended with Article VI, "I will never forget that I am an American, fighting for freedom, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and in the United States of America."

I guess I never thought about how that changed as I moved into civilian life, even though the Code is so ingrained in me that it is still a part of who I am. However, there is a deeper, more personal code that governs the way I go about my day-to-day business, and which I see mirrored day in and day out by the city staff. Some who are astute have noted it scrawled across the top of the dry erase board in my office. It reads, "Do the Right Thing, Be Kind, Walk Humbly." Those who are even more astute might recognize where it comes from, but that would be the topic of another article. I wrote it up there as a reminder to me with the intent that it would also soak into my staff's minds, and as I meet with people it constantly reminds me how I am to act. Many times the question comes up in my office, "What do you think we should do?" My answer is always the same, "Do the Right Thing, Be Kind, Walk Humbly." How has that played out in the past 10 months since I started as City Manager?

We managed to do the right thing and put the charter school that wanted to purchase property in a residential neighborhood through the proper procedures regarding traffic impact to show that it was not a feasible proposition. That required some quick drafting and approval of ordinances by Council to make it happen, to include drafting and passing an ordinance after signing the settlement agreement with the school which iron clad the city from having to deal with that situation in a residential neighborhood again in the future. Throughout the process we remained kind and humble, never giving the charter school an opportunity to say that they had been dealt with unfairly. In the end, they found a better site for them and the City of Castle Hills dodged a significant bullet.

We managed to do the right thing on the 2018 budget, treating the taxpayer's dollar as our own and passing a fiscally sound budget that resulted in a \$206,000 surplus without raising the tax rate to be used for infrastructure or other needs for the City, subject to Council approval. By comparison, the 2017 budget only carried a \$27,000 surplus. I believe that was lost in some of the emotional and often misinformed arguments put before Council by some residents during the budget proceedings. In addition, we also anticipate another large surplus from the 2017 budget as a result of the fiscally conservative approach taken by the City's

Department Heads in executing the budget, which will also be used for infrastructure per an ordinance the Council passed previously. Rather than "spend it if you got it," the Department Heads truly only spend funds as necessary, contrary to what some might believe.

With regards to customer service, doing the right thing and treating others with kindness and humility have garnered rave reviews from our customers. Not a week goes by that I don't receive positive comments from residents on our staff. Of course, some of what we do as a city staff is unpopular, and we also receive criticism from time-to-time. However, we always make an effort to treat our critics with dignity and respect and explain the city's position based on our ordinances, and typically we part ways with a new understanding of one another. Your city staff truly takes their charge to serve the citizens of Castle Hills to heart. They are a gem in the crown of the City of Castle Hills.

I guess if I was to re-write the Code of Conduct for the city staff, it would read, "I am a public servant, serving on the team which takes care of the city of Castle Hills, our residents and stakeholders and their ways of life. I am prepared to do whatever it takes to do my job," and would end with "I will never forget that I am a public servant, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to taking care of the city of Castle Hills, our residents and our stakeholders. I will treat all with dignity and respect, humility and kindness, and I will always do the right thing."

Thanks for reading this. Have a wonderful Holiday Season and enjoy all the blessings it brings!

D.A. DESIGNS

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Council Comments



JR Trevino,
Place 1

Friends,

The end of the year is almost here! I hope everyone had a great October! First and foremost, we officially passed our City budget. There were only a few items that residents reached out to me about for clarification. On that note, I would like to add that we regularly hold budget workshops before the budget is complete. Budget workshops are the best time to ask questions and share your wisdom with us. I've come to learn that that we are very fortunate that Castle Hills is home many subject matter experts. We always welcome comments, questions, and concerns!

Everyone should be glad to know that we voted to keep the same tax rate, .501345. This is my second budget session and the second time we have voted to keep it the same. As many of you have noticed, just because the tax rate stays the same doesn't mean that your taxes will not go up. Fortunately and unfortunately, our property values are increasing. It's great to know that your most valuable asset is appreciating but it is never fun to pay taxes. I personally feel that Castle Hills has been rather lucky in this regard. Property values have been raising drastically all over San Antonio while most of us in Castle Hills have only seen a modest increase.

In mid-October State Senator Jose Menendez reached out to all the Mayor's in Senate District 26. Senator Menendez wanted to have a conversation about what is going on at the Capital in Austin and how it affects operations in small municipalities like Castle Hills, Balcones Heights, and Leon Valley. While Mayor Howell was eager to discuss our issues, he was unable to attend. Thankfully Senator Menendez and Mayor Howell encourage me to attend as Mayor Pro-Tem. It is great to know that Senator Menendez is eager to learn about our City and the unique challenges that we face. Senator Menendez' district only covers half of Castle Hills. Senator Donna Campbell covers District 25 which is North of 410. I'm hopeful that Senator Campbell will consider a similar type of dialogue because I truly believe that these types of conversations are beneficial.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone for a great National Night Out. This year I had the privilege of riding in our very own Castle Hills Fire Department ladder truck! While we were not able to make it to all the parties, we did attend about 8 out of the 14 that were hosted. We were a little nervous that rain may have dissuaded people from having their parties but were wrong! Everyone made the best of rainy situation and got out to enjoy the evening with the neighbors!

As always, please feel free to reach out to me with your comments, questions, and concerns!



L-R Windcrest Mayor Alan Baxter, Live Oak Mayor Mary Dennis, State Senator Jose Menendez, San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Leon Valley Mayor Chris Riley, Castle Hills Mayor Pro-Tem JR Trevino, Balcones Heights Mayor Suzanne de Leon.

Yours in service,

JR Trevino
City Council, Place 1
JTrevino@CityofCastleHills.com
210-559-5940
pg.4



Marettta Scott,
Place 2

I invite all Castle Hills residents to stop by the Commons on Tuesday, December 5th from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm for the Lighting of the Lights. Young and old will enjoy the sights and sounds of the holidays. In addition to the lighting of the tree, there are opportunities to take photos with Santa Clause, Blue Santa, and action heroes. The Commons will be turned into a winter wonderland with SNOW! The magic of the evening will include Santa's elves reading holiday stories and an arts and crafts table. Plan to join in and share the joy of the holidays and see the smiles of the young and young at heart!

The Scott family wishes you a safe and happy holiday season!

Marettta Scott
Alderman Place 2



Amy McLin,
PLACE 3

"Year Round" school means different things in different parts of the United States and around the world. Castle Hills Elementary School is the only year-round school in NEISD. Parents, students, and faculty love the schedule because of its adequate, but shorter summer and quarterly two week breaks. Our family wishes other NEISD schools - including middle and high schools - would pick up this schedule because it makes sense for so many reasons. This is our sixth year and the last with all of our children on the same schedule. Couple that with missing our annual summer vacation to a family place in Minnesota and learning that our son's god parents and one of my cousins were moving to Germany over the summer, and my husband and I started to work on a plan.

We determined that we would seize the opportunity of a two-week school break in October to travel to Europe for a 16 day trip. We are blessed that we could show our children a small part of the world starting in Nice, France (with side trips to Antibes and Monaco), next to Milan, Italy for two nights, then through Switzerland to Germany to stay with friends and family for six nights. We explored a lot of South Western Germany and ended with four nights in Paris, France. While in Paris, we could orchestrate a "rendez vous" with another Castle Hills family in the shadows of the Eiffel Tower!

Our family of five lugged suitcases and backpacks through airports in four cities and on and off trains in three countries. The kids have learned to navigate European trains and the Paris Metro. They have learned how to greet people, how

Continued on page 4>>

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<<Continued from Page 3

to be polite, and how to order meals in French, Italian, and German. They have seen some amazing sights, but they understand there is so much they missed in each city we visited. Most importantly our kids now see that the world is not all like us and that while we do a lot of things well in America, there are a lot of things we can learn from other places.

This trip to Europe was different for me. I looked at the world through the eyes of a parent and I looked at the world through the eyes of a public official. I looked at each city and its infrastructure ... streets ... parks ... public transportation ... signs ... sanitation ... recycling programs ... police and fire services. I took mental notes and I took pictures. To make the City of Castle Hills the very best it can be we have to look beyond our boundaries for great ideas and we need to make an honest evaluation of our City.

The old Castle Hills ways are not the best or most efficient way of doing things today. Our streets need work, we have drainage problems, and we must simultaneously address other items such as walkability that add value for our citizens and businesses. I am inspired more than ever to make the world a better place by starting right here in Castle Hills! Please contact me with your ideas for our beautiful city.

Sincerely,
Amy M. McLin
Alderman Place 3
P: 210.319.4488 Ext. 102
F: 210.319.4444
E: amclin@cityofcastlehills.com



Frank Paul,
PLACE 4

I offer my congratulations to Sharon Pillet, who was named the Citizen of the Year by Mayor Howell at the October city council meeting. Sharon is a Castle Hills resident who graciously shares her time, treasure and talents to make Castle Hills a strong vibrant community. Volunteers like Sharon make the neighborhood, the city and the world a better place. Thank you, Sharon!

The months of November and December bring families and friends together for special events, holiday parties, shopping, and celebrations. Each of these are wonderful times that create memories to last a lifetime. At Thanksgiving, we pause to appreciate and give thanks. In early December, we attend college graduations sharing the successes of graduates. December is the time of religious holidays filled with joy and love. New Year's Eve is a time to reminisce about the past year and start the New Year with renewed convictions.

As we enjoy each of these wonderful times, please keep in mind your personal safety and the security of your property. If you will be out of town, have trusted neighbors keep a watchful eye on your home. Call the police department (210) 342-2341 to request extra patrols when you are traveling. Be sure to lock your vehicles when they are parked. Do not leave valuables in your vehicles. Use a designated driver or call for a cab or ride sharing company to get you safely to your destination if you plan to consume alcoholic beverages. Take a minute to plan ahead to be safe and end 2017 with happy memories!

Thank you

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



Douglas Gregory,
PLACE 5

Looking back over 2017, even though there are major divisions within your City Council on how your tax money is spent, there has been major progress on addressing street improvements.

As Chairman of the Street and Drainage Committee, this working group is proposing two major street makeovers, which are expected to be completed next year. In addition, for the first time, a three year plan of street renovations is going before City Council for approval. We will have a clear vision (for three years) of what is to be done and finding the necessary funds to get the job accomplished.

As the Chairman of the Master Plan Committee, I head a group compiling recommendations on how Castle Hills might evolve over the next decade. Even though the City is already built out, for the most part, a consensus statement directing future growth must be set down in order to provide a clear blueprint on how to retain the charm of our neighborhoods while at the same time encourage economic development.

As we close out this very challenging year, I send my warmest wishes to one and all for a joyous Holiday Season and a prosperous New Year.

Douglas Gregory
210-342-5442
210-378-4481

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Reality TV vs. Reality

Luis Zamarron, Code Compliance

Happy Holidays to all. This month's short article will cover an increasingly prevalent problem in Castle Hills. Whether it's a true market demand or the less-than-realistic influence of house "flipping" t.v. shows, Code Compliance has seen a marked increase in work being conducted without proper permitting. Several full-scale home renovation projects have come to a stand-still because of the lack of permitting. Work performed without the required permitting may result in the issuance of a court summons. In addition to the summons, the general contractors and/or project managers must still submit plans and other information necessary to get their projects back on track.

Castle Hills follows the entire International Code (2015) and all its various chapters. Additionally, the City requires permits for things not found in the International Code such tree trimming permits. Best practices for projects big and small is to simply call the permits department (210.293.9675) to determine if a permit is needed for your project. The alternative is to have your project stopped and issued a Stop Work/ Trespass Order. Owners and contractors are then charged double for the work already done in addition to citations issued for mandatory court appearances. This cannot be healthy for the bottom line of any project. Remember that the Police, the Fire Chief, Code Compliance and/or the Building Inspector all have the authority to enter upon any property to determine if illegal (non-permitted) and/or unsafe work is being done, as provided by the Code. If you notice work being done in your neighborhood and you don't see a permit posted on a door or window; feel free to call the Permits Office to ask if a permit has been issued. If no permit has been issued, code compliance will be alerted and sent out to the property.

We all get caught up in the apparent fun and profitability of home flipping as seen on t.v. but the reality can be far different. If you are planning to "flip" a property or just doing a DIY project, check with the permit department to determine if a permit and inspections are required.

Thank you for your time.

Luis Zamarron
Code Compliance Officer



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COUNCIL MEETING

HIGHLIGHTS



August 22, 2017 Regular City Council Meeting

- Approved the minutes for the August 8, 2017 City Council Meeting.
- The proposed Interlocal Agreement with the City of San Antonio for construction, good and service, and subsequent contract with Intermountain Slurry Seal for microslurry sealing on West Avenue was tabled until the September 12, 2017 city council meeting.
- The City Council unanimously approved the submission of an application for consideration by the U.S. Department of State's Passport Acceptance Program.
- The City Council unanimously approved by Minute Entry the concept for a vehicle storage impound lot and associated staff facilities.
- Ordinance No. 2017-08-22A unanimously approved for establishing a Schedule of Fees for various city permits, city licenses and services.
- Ordinance No. 2017-08-22B Amending Chapter 38, Streets, Sidewalks, and Other Public Places, Repealing Article VI, Work in the Right of Way, and Adopting Chapter 49, Work in the Right of Way, and Adopting Article I, Work in the Right of Way was unanimously approved.
- Ordinance No. 201-08-22C approved amending Chapter 49 by adopting Article II Public Right of Way Management for Wireless Network Providers with a 4-1 vote.
- Council tabled until the September 12, 2017 city council meeting the item to consider changing the City of Castle Hills Municipal Court to a Court of Record.

August 24, 2017 Special City Council Meeting

- The Council took a record vote by minute entry to consider the proposed tax rate of \$5.501345/\$100 of tax valuation which was the same as the 2016 tax rate. The motion passed 4-1.
- Conducted the first of two-public hearing on the proposed tax rate of \$0.501345/\$100 of tax valuation.

August 31, 2017 Budget Work Session #3

- Presentation and discussion of the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2018.

September 7, 2017 Special City Council Meeting

- Held the second public hearing on the proposed tax rate of \$0.501345/\$100 of tax valuation.

September 12, 2017 Regular City Council Meeting

- Proclamation recognizing "Castle Hills Woman's Club 65th Anniversary".
- Ordinance No. 2017-09-12-A converting Municipal Court to a Court of Record approved on the Consent Agenda.
- Ordinance No. 2017-09-12-B amending the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2. Administration, by revising the regular city council meeting schedule approved by the city council.
- Ordinance No. 2017-09-12-C to decrease the employee contribution to TMRS from 7% to 6% and increase the city's current match from 1.5 to 1 to match ratio 2 to 1 failed upon a vote.
- Ordinance No. 2017-09-12-D to adopt the FY2018 Operating Budget and the cost of living allowance for the city staff was approved by council.
- Ordinance No. 2017-09-12-E was adopted by the city council to accept the proposed tax rate of \$0.501345/\$100 of tax valuation.
- Ordinance No. 2017-09-12-F ratifying the FY2017 Operating Budget was approved by the city council.
- Ordinance No. 2017-09-12-G was approved by the city council adopting a policy for copious public information requests.
- Conducted a Public Hearing on the application from The Christian School at Castle Hills to amend the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 50; to add "(5) Day nursery, preschool or kindergarten in conjunction with a public, private or denominational school having a curriculum equivalent to grades 1 through 12 of a public school" at the end of Sec. 50-497(a); to repeal Sec. 50-497(b)(1) and renumber Sec. 50-497(b) accordingly.
- Ordinance No. 2017-09-12-H amending the Code of Ordinances, Chapter

50; to add "(5) Day nursery, preschool or kindergarten in conjunction with an existing public, private or denominational school having a curriculum equivalent to grades 1 through 12 of a public school" at the end of Sec. 50-497(a); to repeal Sec. 50-497(b)(1) and renumber Sec. 50-497(b) accordingly was approved by the city council.

- Conducted a Public Hearing on the application from The Christian School at Castle Hills for a Special Use Permit for a day nursery, preschool, or kindergarten and a denominational school having a curriculum equivalent to grades 1 through 12. The city council approved the SUP with Ordinance No. 2017-09-12-I for The Christian School at Castle Hills as requested.
- Conducted a Public Hearing on an application from Wedgwood Senior Apartments to repeal Sec. 50-225(3) establishing a minimum size for apartment units; amend Sec. 50-227(d)(3) to reduce minimum lot area for high rise apartments from 1500 sq. ft. to 800 sq. ft. per dwelling unit; amend Sec. 50-227(f) to reduce the minimum requirement of off-street parking spaces from 2 cars per dwelling unit to 1.3 cars per dwelling unit; amend Sec. 50-228(a) to exempt front yard fence height limitations from applicability of Sec. 50-66 to the D High Rise Apartment District; and repealing Sec. 50-228(b). The city council approved Ordinance No. 2017-09-12-J approving the request for amending Chapter 50 D High Rise Apartment District.
- Ordinance No. 2017-09-12K amending Chapter 40, Subdivisions, by adopting a new Article VII, Access, to require access to streets from platted lots, and amending Chapter 8, Buildings and Building Regulations, Sec. 8-180, to revise the title thereof was adopted by city council.

September 26, 2017 Work Session

- Discussed appointment of three alternate members to the Board of Adjustment.
- Discussed decreasing the employee contribution to TMRS from 7% to 6% and increasing the city's current match from 1.5 to 1 to match ratio 2 to 1.

September 26, 2017 Special City Meeting

- Ordinance No. 2017-09-26-A approving the FY2018 Budget for the Crime Control and Prevention District approved by city council.
- Ordinance No. 2017-09-26-B authorizing the City Manager to sign a Mutual Aid Agreement for Emergency Fire Fighting Assistance with the City of Hollywood Park approved by city council.

October 10, 2017 Regular City Council Meeting

- Resident Sharon Pillet was named Citizen of the Year.
- Detective Jim Cheatham was recognized as the Winner of the 2017 Police Department Fitness Challenge. Officer Gary Tomblin was recognized as the Most Improved in the Fitness Challenge.
- The City Council confirmed the appointment of Ian McLin, Agdel Rivera, and John Squire as alternate member to the Board of Adjustment.
- The City Council confirmed the mayoral appointments of Council Member McLin, Council Member Gregory, Quentin Baker, Tom Reichenberger, Steve Ackely, Robbie Casey, Tom Fentress, Terry Warth, Suzanne Riley, Lesley Wenger, Ginger Magers, and Richard Szecsy to the Master Plan Committee.
- Ordinance No. 2017-10-10-A amending Chapter 49, Work in the Right-of-Way, amending Article I, Sec 49-9(D) Construction/Excavation was approved by the City Council.
- The City Council with Resolution No. R2107-101-10-A authorized the City Manager to enter into a contract with RPS Klotz Associates not to exceed \$115,000 for the revised project design of Phase III of the Street Program.
- The City Council approved by Resolution No. R2017-10-10-B supporting Council Member McLin as the city's candidate for the Bexar County Appraisal District Board of Directors.
- The City Council cancelled the December 26, 2017 city council meeting.
- Staff was directed to prepare for a cross walk from Castle Hills Elementary School to the Commons in the 200 block of Lemonwood Drive.

Holiday Decorating and Electrical Cords Safety Tips

The Christmas holidays can be a time for beautiful home decorations, but these beautiful decorations can also bring dangers to your home. Here are some tips for selecting and maintaining live or artificial Christmas trees, and lighting in your home.

- Many artificial trees are fire resistant. If you buy one, look for a statement specifying this protection.
- A fresh tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry tree. To check for freshness, remember: A fresh tree is green.
- Fresh needles are hard to pull from branches. When bent between your fingers, fresh needles do not break.
- The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin.
- When the trunk of a tree is bounced on the ground, a shower of falling needles shows that tree is too dry.
- Place tree away from fireplaces, and other heat sources. Heated rooms dry trees out rapidly, creating fire hazards.
- Cut off about two inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption. Trim away branches as necessary to set tree trunk in the base of a sturdy, water-holding stand with wide spread feet. Keep the stand filled with water while the tree is indoors.
- Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.
- Use thin guy-wires to secure a large tree to walls or ceiling. These wires are almost invisible.

It's likely that when you think of electrical cords, your main concern is hiding them from view in your holiday decorations. However, cords of all kinds need to be properly inspected, used and stored to reduce your risk of a fire. Follow these tips to help you keep cords out of sight but also safely on your mind.

- When using an extension cord, select a cord that is long enough to meet your needs. Never attempt to extend the length of an extension cord by connecting it with another extension cord.
- Check that all electrical items, including extension cords, are certified by a nationally recognized independent testing lab, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Intertek (ETL), or Canadian Standards Association (CSA).
- Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis.
- Do not place power cords and extension cords in high traffic areas or under carpets, rugs or furniture.
- Be sure it is not placed at an angle or position in way that pinches the cord.
- Never nail or staple cords to the wall or baseboard which can damage the wire insulation.
- Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-prong outlet.
- Make sure extension cords are properly rated for their intended use, indoor or outdoor, and meet or exceed the power needs of the item being used.
- Do not run extension cords through walls or ceilings. This may cause the cord to overheat, creating a fire hazard.
- Insert plugs fully so that no part of the prongs is exposed when the extension cord is in use.

From all of us at the Castle Hills Fire Department, we wish you a very Merry Christmas, and a happy New Year!



Chief Dover



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The holiday season is upon us and 2018 is fast approaching. It is our hope that 2018 is another great year for all. I would first like to take a moment to recognize Chief Wayne Davis, who retired October 6, 2017 after 20 years of service in Castle Hills. Chief Davis' contributions are numerous, and far reaching; rest assured he was hands down one of the best in the business. Although he is only a few hours away in Port Mansfield running his fishing guide and lure business, he will be missed greatly here at the department. We will make a concerted effort to stay on the path he has paved for us. **Thank you for your service Chief Davis!**

Now, on to crime prevention and awareness. The holidays bring us joy, family, fellowship, and thefts....not necessarily in that order. Criminals are primarily opportunistic. This time of year, more than others, criminals are seeking soft targets such as unlocked vehicles or full mail boxes. That said, the best deterrent is not to provide them with any opportunities. Well, what does that mean exactly? So glad you asked, the following is a list of actions to consider and employ when applicable:

- be wary of scams
- regularly check and remove mail from mailboxes
- if you must mail checks, do so at the post office proper
- hide or store valuables in your trunk while shopping, **ANYWHERE NOT IN PLAIN SIGHT**
- remove items of value from vehicles upon returning home
- secure your vehicles and residences
- know your neighbors and look out for one another
- **report suspicious activity, we are here for you**

We thank you for all your support and will continue to provide the best possible service an agency can offer. If you ever need anything please do not hesitate to call, remember we are here 24/7/365.



Chief Johnny Siemens
Dispatch – 210.342.2341

Seat Belt Safety

In the state of Texas if you are riding in a passenger vehicle you are required to wear your seat belt regardless of how old you are and whether you choose to ride in the front or back seat of the vehicle. One consequence of not wearing your seat belt is receiving a traffic citation. As a driver, you may be issued a citation for not wearing a seat belt or allowing a child passenger fourteen years or younger to not be properly restrained while you are operating the vehicle. If you are a passenger in a vehicle and you are fifteen years old or older and not wearing your seat belt you can be issued a citation for not wearing your seatbelt instead of the driver. Those fines can range from \$25.00 to \$250.00.

The following is a guideline for child passenger safety:

- Children from birth to 35 pounds (around the age two) should ride in a rear facing child safety seat.
- Children from ages 3 to 4 should ride in a safety seat with a five-point harness system depending on weight and height of child.
- After a child has reached age 4 or weights 40 or more pounds a child may ride in a booster seat until the child is ready for an adult seat belt that fits across their chest and lap.

Additional seatbelt safety tips:

- Do not place the chest strap behind your back or under your arm when riding in a vehicle. If your seat belt does not fit properly you can a purchase strap adjusters so the seat belt fits properly.
- Make sure all passengers are buckled before you start your vehicle.
- One seat belt per passenger.

Putting on your seat belt is one of the easiest vehicle safety tasks that one can perform. It's a well-known fact passengers who wear seat belts have a reduced risk of serious injury or death when in an accident. Passengers who ride in a vehicle unrestrained can be ejected from the vehicle or thrown about the vehicle which could cause harm to other passengers and themselves.

Drive safe,

Tina Zelenak and Vicki Beaver
Court Clerk Deputy Clerk

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Hello Everyone,

The city of Castle Hills was established in 1952 and in July, about a half of year later, it was felt that there was a serious need for "a woman's touch in civic affairs." A group of interested women met and established the Castle Hills Woman's Club. Since then, their accomplishments have been short of miraculous, from helping the volunteer fire department to purchase new trucks to building a community recreation center back in the day to our current involvement in both civic and community endeavors.

Here are a few ways that we supported our community recently:

- Special thanks to JoAnne Hayashi, Melissa McGuire, Judy Crawford, Elaine Neathery, Helen Reichenberger and Leslie Weber for assisting Jackson Keller with their school book fair. In addition, the following ladies also helped with the Fall Festival at Jackson Keller: JoAnne Hayashi, Norma McClelland, Shery French, Lissa Matinez and Leslie Weber. Bags of candy were also donated by many members for this event!

Here are some of our upcoming events

- Our 1st Yard sale will take place on November 4th in the Commons area from 9 AM to 2PM. Come and shop for some great bargains!
- Later in November, we continue our holiday tradition of decorating the Castle Hills Community Room to make it fun and festive!
- On December 4th, we go to the Argyle Club to meet the fascinating owner of Daisy Tours and author of *You Are Driving Me Crazy*!
- Later in December, we continue another club tradition. We will assemble gift boxes of cookies and deliver them to our city employees. Every member is asked to donate 3 dozen cookies so we can show our thanks and appreciation.

The Castle Hills Woman's Club wishes each of you a very special holiday season filled with family, friends and lots of memorable festivities!

Bernie Barnes
President, Castle Hills Woman's Club



**Interested in joining the
Castle Hills Woman's Club?**

Please send an email to
castlehillswomansclub@gmail.com.

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RETIRING EMPLOYEES

Police Sergeant Steve Hart retired from the Castle Hills Police Department on October 31st after 29 years of service. Sgt. Hart began his career as a patrol officer, promoted to Patrol Corporal, Patrol Sergeant, and then Administrative/Training Sergeant. Sgt. Hart served As the President of the Castle Hills Police Officer's Association for many years. Sgt. Hart will be missed by the community. Thank you Sgt. Hart for your selfless service to the citizens of Castle Hills.

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National Night Out a Huge Success!



Thank you to the 14 residents who hosted parties on Tuesday, October 3rd for National Night Out. Despite the threat of thunderstorms and brief showers 364 residents enjoyed good food, games, bounce houses, and socializing with their neighbors. Block parties encourage neighbors to watch out for each other, and report suspicious activity which often results in arrests. Neighborhoods are friendlier when are neighbors are friends and acquaintances. If your neighborhood did not have a block party on National Night Out, plan to host one next year on Tuesday, October 2, 2018.



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CITY SNAPSHOTS



Owner Cam Pham Thuy Duong cuts the ceremonial red ribbon at Upper Nails located at 2241 N.W. Military Hwy., Suite 103.



Antonion College Preparatory High School hosted a grand opening and ribbon cutting on September 14th for the dedication of the Pettit Family Center for Academic Excellence.



The Season For Giving Back



Blue Santa

The Castle Hills Police Department is collecting toys for area children



December 1, 2017
through
January 1, 2016



Drop off unwrapped toys in the foyer at City Hall,
209 Lemonwood drive

Thank you for making the holidays special for the
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Cooking Safety

Cooking brings family and friends together, provides an outlet for creativity and can be relaxing. But did you know that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries? By following a few safety tips you can prevent these fires.

"COOK WITH CAUTION"

- » Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol don't use the stove or stovetop.
- » Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- » If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- » Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

If you have a small (grease) cooking fire and decide to fight the fire...

- » On the stovetop, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- » For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

If you have any doubt about fighting a small fire...

- » Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- » Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number from outside the home.



Cooking and Kids

Have a "kid-free zone" of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

FACTS

- ! The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- ! Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove.



Emergency Call 9-1-1

Non-Emergency 210-293-9677



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Neighborhood News, Inc.
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(210) 558-3160 * (210) 558-3163 fax

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