

THE Hill Country VILLAGE



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INTRODUCING THE CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

The Hill Country Village HOA held a Town Hall on February 25th to introduce our City Council candidates for election, which is being held on May 3rd, 2025.

This article is a brief profile of all candidates attending, with information taken from the Town Hall.



PATRICK SCHNEIDER

Our first candidate for Place 1, Patrick Schneider was a landscape architect, first obtaining his license in 1980. servicing the private sector for 28 years and the public sector for 15 years. He retired two years ago from the City of San Antonio Public Works Department, where he was a Project Manager.

Mr. Schneider grew up as a Hill Country Village resident and is still living in the same house his parents bought 70 years ago. He notes “not too many people...have their current address and their birth certificate...the same address.” Mr. Schneider decided to run for office to give back to the community.

Mr. Schneider is concerned about the current direction of the City Council regarding zoning changes and our water tower. He believes that a challenge facing Hill Country Village is preserving our unique advantages while keeping up with our infrastructure.



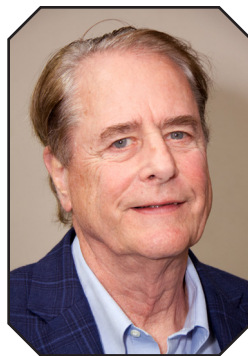
HEATHER CHANDLER

Our second candidate for Place 1, Heather Chandler is a graphic designer specializing in projects serving clients such as hospitals. She has worked for 26 years in this industry, “listening to many different user groups while working towards building a consensus”. Ms. Chandler is currently serving on

the Hill Country Village Zoning Committee, along with the Business District Construction Review Board.

The Chandler family has lived in Hill Country Village for almost a decade. According to Ms. Chandler, her husband Craig grew up here and “remembers riding his bike by our house as a kid.” Ms. Chandler chose to run for office because she believes that “her unique skill set...make(s) her a good fit for a Council position.”

One of Candidate Chandler’s concerns is ensuring the integrity of the Hill Country Village community while planning for the future. The ramifications of upcoming Council decisions are especially important.



ROBERT WALKER

Our first candidate for Place 3, Robert Walker started his career as an owner/manager in the family car rental business, occasionally taking a break to work in construction. The car rental business eventually had a presence in multiple countries and had over 1000 employees.

Eventually selling the business in 2006, Mr. Walker went back into construction as a general contractor, helping to build projects in the San Antonio area, including along the River Walk.

Mr. Walker and his wife Patty bought a house in Hill Country Village in 1991 and raised 8 children. Now that Mr. Walker has “time that I didn’t have before, because I don’t have 8 kids at home”, he would like to contribute by running for office.

Mr. Walker is concerned that Hill Country Village may not have “enough money to do what we like to do”. He suggests that he might not mind paying a bit more in taxes if it meant a stronger police presence and more street maintenance. “I think that’s a quality-of-life thing and you have to...pay as you go.”

(Continued on page 3...)



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FRANK RIVAS

Our second candidate for Place 3, Frank Rivas has been a practicing attorney here for 45 years. Initially, Mr. Rivas worked as a prosecutor in the DA's office. After that, he went into private practice, ultimately managing the in-house litigation firm for State Farm Insurance. Then he decided to retire.

Mr. Rivas still has an active license; however, he currently spends his time volunteering for the state bar, working to regulate attorneys that have garnered complaints.

Mr. Rivas can trace his lineage back to the founding families of San Antonio – the “Canary Island Folks”. He was born and raised in San Antonio and has lived in the area all his life, apart from a brief stint attending college in Austin. The Rivas family moved to Hill Country Village in 1992, purchasing a house. He has raised 3 children in our community.

Mr. Rivas is concerned that constructing our new City Hall is necessary but may be challenging. “The process may really keep the Council on its toes”. He also shared concerns regarding the City’s pending Tower litigation. “That can be a huge drain on the city...both in terms of resources...but also financially.”



ALLISON FRANCIS (INCUMBENT)

Our first candidate for Place 5, Allison Francis, has been a HCV City Council Member since August 2018. She has spent most of her adult life working in government. Ms. Francis started her career working for a Bexar County Commissioner. After that, she briefly worked for the San Antonio Water System.

Ms. Francis is currently serving as a Vice President of Governmental Relations, where she manages fundraising and outreach. She also oversees the integrated marketing and communications departments.

Allison Francis is a San Antonio native and has been in Hill Country Village since 2017. Ms. Francis has 5 children in a blended family, along with 4 grandchildren.

Ms. Francis is concerned that some large budget items, such as police cars and city employee benefits are pending, and our current budget may not be enough to pay for them. “I hate taxes. Do I want to raise property taxes? No. But we’ve got to take a careful look at what we’ve got coming up.” Our current City Hall building is also a concern for Ms. Francis, who considers the current building inadequate.



DR. IAN THOMPSON III

Our second candidate for Place 5, Dr. Thompson, is a practicing urologist, having recently served as Chief Medical Officer for Christus Health Center. Six years ago, Dr. Thompson started a staffing company helping to bolster urological access throughout the country.

Dr. Thompson also is working to help create affordable housing throughout San Antonio and the surrounding area. From a policy standpoint, he recently traveled to Washington to advocate for senior Medicare access and works in Africa regularly with his church, First Baptist Church of San Antonio.

Dr. Ian Thompson is a new resident to Hill Country Village, but he has lived in the area since he was a child, graduating from Keystone school in San Antonio. He is still learning about the specific concerns challenging Hill Country Village, but as problems arise he believes in “coming at them with an open mind, evaluating them in a collaborative manner – how you address them”.

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OUR 2025 FUN RUN!

The HOA Annual Fun Run was held on Saturday, March 29th. Residents laced up their shoes, gathered their families and set off on a long run -- or maybe more of a stroll.

As in previous years, the course circled around the village, at a length of approximately three miles. The route has many hills, and most of the participants found themselves walking before the event was over.

Some of the folks running for Hill Country Village City Council showed up to join in the festivities. Frank Rivas (Place 3 candidate), Pat Schneider (Place 1 candidate) and Dr. Ian Thompson III (Place 5 candidate) all walked the trail.

Also present were Council Members Matthew Acock and Greg Blasko. Councilman Acock participated in the race, while Councilman Blasko acted as timekeeper and helped the HOA provide tacos from our local Taco Palenque.

As always, the Hill Country Village Police Department was integral to the event by blocking off traffic and keeping our residents safe as they jogged.

This year, the winner was Thomas Ojeda, with a time of 29:15:46. When asked what factors led to his victory, the young man replied that he “plays sports a lot”. His suggestion to other runners is to “stay active”. Thomas seems to be taking his own advice – he participates in an 800-meter District Track Meet at his school.

In second place was our HOA President Brian Skop, with a time of 30:14. Brian notes that “Hill Country Village is a great place to run”, pointing out the wide road shoulders available for running. He also believes the relative lack of traffic aids runners. Brian runs through Hill Country Village “all the time” with his fitness group. His advice to new runners is “don’t go too far, too fast”.

Third place belongs to Michael Cap, with a time of 31:00. Michael left before he could be interviewed – perhaps he’s already practicing for next year.

With a great turnout, despite the drizzly conditions, holding a 2026 Fun Run seems like a sure bet. So, lace up your shoes, start training, and get ready for next year’s run! Or just enjoy a nice walk. The decision is up to you.



Ladies Dinner



No Foolin' – the ladies enjoyed a fine dinner at Paesanos Restaurant on April 1st! Candidates Heather Chandler (Place 1) and Allison Francis (Place 5) join the Ladies Dinner for a fun night of food and enjoyment. Come to the next one! For more information on our dinners, contact Sandi at sandi@mesquiteinteriorslp.com.



Left side: Kim Tucker, Lily Scott, Heather Chandler, and Maribel Frey. Right side: Allison Francis, Julie Connolly, Veronica Kuest, Roma Cook, and Rene Perry.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, April 18 at 10AM – HOA Easter Egg Hunt

Thursday, April 24 time TBD – Administrative Professional's Day

Wednesday, June 4th at 6:30PM – Hill Country Village HOA Meeting



**NEXT HOA MEETING
IS AT 6:30PM ON
JUNE 4TH**



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HCVillageHOA@gmail.com

Vice President: Tyler Willmann (2018)

101 Cabin Path • 210-415-1404 • tylerwillmann@kw.com

Secretary: Barbara Durand-Hollis (2008)

16311 Hidden View • 210-827-8247

bdurandhollis@aol.com

Treasurer: William Scott (2018)

16403 Hidden View • 210-481-0651 • bill@billscottcpa.org

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William Bowe (2022) 16318 Hidden View / 781-690-6985

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Jason Train (2023) jasontrain@swift-train.com

Denisse Mendoza (2024) 306 Hidden View / 210-836-7741

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Neighborhood News: Paul Ehrlich / 210-558-3160

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maddie@neighborhoodnews.com

PURPLE FLOWERS, POISONOUS SEEDS AND YOU

Springtime in Hill Country Village can be glorious. Roses, sleeping all winter, finally bloom. Animals rise out of their slumber. Meanwhile, one little tree – an evergreen – manages to outdo all its neighbors by sporting a striking purple bloom that smells of bubble gum.

This native plant is the Texas Mountain Laurel, otherwise known as the frijolito. Often appearing as a shrub, this plant can sometimes be a tree too, up to 30 feet in height. As these plants are slow growing, a big Texas Mountain Laurel tree is to be appreciated.

Native insects are attracted to the plant. *Lopidea Major*, the Red Mountain Laurel mirid, is a gorgeous red and black insect that feeds on Texas Mountain Laurel. Unfortunately, certain *Genista* caterpillars also feed on the plant, and they can do real damage in large numbers. If you own a Texas Mountain Laurel plant, check it periodically for webbing – these caterpillars like to spin “silk”. If you see them on your tree, either soak it down with a hose or pick the caterpillars off. You may want to use insecticide for severe cases.

While caterpillars love to eat Texas Mountain Laurel, humans and other animals should avoid eating the plant. Texas Mountain Laurel is very poisonous. If you have pets or small children that may nibble on your local plant life, it may be best to plant something else in your backyard.

While the plant is poisonous to eat, it is generally safe to touch. I have a Texas Mountain Laurel in my backyard and have brushed up against its branches while raking. Fortunately, I am still alive and writing newsletter articles. Even so, you may want to exercise caution by wearing gloves and long sleeves when working around the plant.

This brings us to another issue regarding Texas Mountain Laurel. The plant is a bit of a mess. Being an evergreen, it continually sheds leaves. The flowers transform into seed pods, which tend to scatter in your yard. If you are a yard perfectionist, you may want to skip planting this in your garden.

Otherwise, the Texas Mountain Laurel is a wonderful plant to cultivate. As a native, it doesn't need much care, and the flowers can provide pleasure for years to come. So, use this plant in your landscaping and enjoy this Texas native!

Thanks to the following websites for providing information regarding this article:

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center <https://www.wildflower.org>

Texas A&M Agrilife Extension <https://agrillife.org>

SQUIRRELS IN THE ATTIC?

Love or hate them, squirrels are an integral part of our Hill Country Village landscape. It's hard to imagine backyards without their presence, raiding bird feeders and planting nuts in the worst possible spots. However, sometimes squirrels can cause problems that go beyond a bird feeder raid. What do you do if a squirrel decides to gnaw on your car's wiring? What happens if a squirrel takes up residence in your attic?

Sixty or seventy years ago, the solution was simple. A squirrel rifle was used to dispatch the wayward critter. Of course, that solution almost guaranteed that another squirrel will come along and start causing trouble. Killing a pesky squirrel may feel satisfying but is a short-term solution. Live trapping raises a lot of the same issues. You may be removing a problem squirrel, but plenty of other squirrels live in your neighborhood. They will be happy to cause problems for you in the future. Instead, like so many other problems in life, better solutions come when you put yourself in the other guy's shoes, or in this case, tiny little paws.

Does your attic have a squirrel-sized hole? Do you have plenty of nut bearing trees nearby? If the answer to these questions is "yes", then you have created prime squirrel real estate, and you are the unwilling landlord. Similarly, squirrels need to chew on objects to live. Their teeth will literally grow into their skulls if they aren't constantly chewing on something. If your old car with dangling wires is left outside, don't be surprised if a squirrel starts chewing on them, causing an expensive repair.

What do you do if your attic has become a squirrel penthouse? First, don't panic. The squirrel needs to be evicted, but being aggressive has its risks. Squirrels are much faster than humans and may bite when cornered. Even worse, squirrels carry all sorts of nasty diseases. If you get bitten, you will have to trundle off to the doctor for stitches and expensive medical treatment.

To evict a squirrel from your attic, visit during the day when the squirrel is out doing squirrel stuff. Try to figure out where the squirrel is coming in. Then, soak some cloth strips in household ammonia or an extremely strong mint solution and place them where the squirrel may be entering and exiting. Use rubber gloves – getting a chemical burn isn't going to get rid of the squirrel any faster. Then, spread extremely hot (as in spicy!) cayenne pepper throughout your attic, or another strong animal repellent. Keep doing this for a few days, and your squirrel problem will be a thing of the past. Make sure to seal up the hole once you're done.

By the way, squirrels are having babies right now. If you suspect that you have a squirrel family living in your attic, the best course of action is to call your local humane society for advice. You may need to wait a month or so until the babies are old enough to be kicked out. Regarding squirrels chewing wires, the solution is about the same. Spray the wire with either cayenne pepper spray or a mint concentrate animal repellent. Also try to find some protection for your wires, if possible. Either way, treating the wires every so often should solve your squirrel problem.

As for keeping squirrels out of your birdfeeder, I wish you the best of luck. All sorts of tips abound on the internet, but a truly determined squirrel can defeat any bird feeder. I have seen squirrels defeat perfectly placed \$100 "squirrel-proof" bird feeders with ease. It may just be best to realize that – every so often – your bird feeder is going to have a chubby bandit and wish him (or her) all the best.

Thanks to the City of San Antonio for providing information contributing to this article: <https://www.sa.gov/Directory/Departments/ACS/Wildlife/Squirrels>



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