

# Blue**line**

Winter | 2020

## This Issue:

District Closures Update  
Security Corner  
Community Events  
District Improvements  
2020 Tax Rate  
Leash Law  
Winter Planting Tips  
Numbers to Know



HARRIS COUNTY  
**MUD 217**

MUD Board of Directors:

D. Johnson, J. Ewing, C. Brown,  
S. Washington, M. Henderson

# COVID-19

## ***DISTRICT CLOSURES UPDATE***

**A**s the risk of COVID-19 remains high, we ask our residents to continue practicing safety protocols by social distancing, wearing face masks and frequently washing hands. We will continue to keep our residents informed regarding information for our community.

**Visit the District Website regularly at: [www.hcmud217.com](http://www.hcmud217.com)**

### **Administrative Building Remains Closed**

**The banquet room, conference room, and gym remain closed due to COVID-19.** When we believe health and safety risk has been lowered and reopening of facilities has been approved by the county, we will return to normal operation. Our onsite manager is available by phone, 832-249-7000, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **The Park and Walking Trail are Open**

Residents can enjoy the park and walking trails within the district, but we ask that you do so safely and that you follow the CDC's guidelines for social distancing by maintaining a distance of at least six feet from other residents.

#### **The do's and don'ts before heading out to the park or trails:**

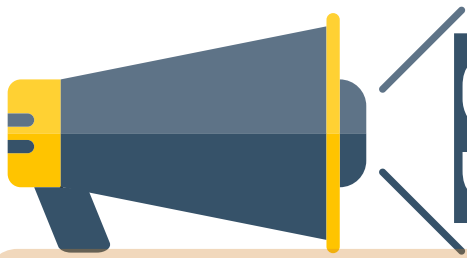
- Do social distance 6 feet from others while at the park or trail.
- Don't go to the park or use the trail if you have symptoms.
- Do have all animals on a leash.

**For additional information and/or updates, call 832-249-7000 or visit our website:**

**[www.hcmud217.com](http://www.hcmud217.com)**

Heritage Park Playground





# SECURITY CORNER

The Board of Directors for Harris County MUD 217 takes the security of its residents very seriously. Since 2017, the Board has provided additional contracted security for Heritage Village. The security patrol hours are based on historical statistics for low and peak times/locations of criminal activity in our community. The deputies operate vehicles both marked and unmarked and look for unusual activity, suspicious persons and vehicles, open doors, broken windows, etc.

In an **EMERGENCY**, your **FIRST** and **BEST** choice is to call **9-1-1 immediately**.

For **NON-EMERGENCY** issues, please call **(713) 221-6000**.

Examples of non-emergencies to report would be:

- suspicious vehicles
- suspicious activity
- vandalism not in progress
- noise complaint
- welfare checks on neighbors



According to Sgt. Jeff McGowan, residents should “Stay Alert, Be Proactive and Watch for Suspicious Behavior.”

## Please Watch Your Speed!

The Board of Directors and Sgt. Jeff McGowan would like residents to know, “We are aware of the recent accident at Swords Creek Road and T.C. Jester Blvd. The District has contacted Harris County Commissioner Precinct 4 office. A traffic study has been conducted. We are awaiting the decision whether or not a traffic control device will be approved.” We will keep residents informed once a decision is made. Please be aware, the speed limit on residential roads in Texas is **30 mph** and 20 mph in a school zone. We ask residents to continue to drive with caution and observe all posted signs.

## Holiday Safety Tips

The holidays are a time of celebration, but it's also a time for extra safety. This year, in addition to being aware of COVID-19 and taking the proper precautions, it is important to be mindful of ways to keep safe in your community.

### Be aware of your surroundings in public

When you are shopping, be aware of your surroundings and keep a keen eye out for thieves or people acting unusual. Also, be careful that you are not being followed from the store exit to your vehicle, or from the store to your house.

### Be proactive at home

Be aware of your surroundings outside of your home. Don't leave valuables inside your car. Your trash can be a clue to criminals. Be careful leaving large electronic boxes at the curb and be aware of what items you are seen bringing into your home.

Also, be mindful of safety precautions you can take at home. Make sure doors and windows are closed and locked at night. Do not leave garage doors open. This is an invitation for strangers to enter your garage.

### Light it up!

Lights are a big crime deterrent. Consider keeping your porch or garage light on at night to scare away potential thieves.

The extra lights will add some holiday flair to your home.

Heritage Village residents may contact the Lead Deputy for our neighborhood, Sgt. Jeff McGowan, at his email address, [mud217sec@gmail.com](mailto:mud217sec@gmail.com)

You may write to him at any time with any of your neighborhood concerns or tips.



# COMMUNITY EVENTS



Harris Co. MUD 217 has hosted several socially distanced community events for the residents in 2020. We would like to thank the residents who participated and celebrated with us. We hope you have enjoyed the events and photos as much as we have.

Your Board of Directors is continuing to work for you! Check our website for more information!



## Bi-annual Cleanup Day- September 2020

This bi-annual event has become a highly popular event. Residents enjoy the opportunity to get rid of extra household clutter, old paperwork, and unwanted electronics. The next clean up day is tentatively scheduled in April 2021.



## Fun Fall Giveaway- October 2020

HC MUD 217 proudly hosted our first-ever Fun Fall Giveaway. Residents were treated to goody bags filled with non-perishable food, hand sanitizer, masks, gloves, candy, and much more. We had a wonderful turnout and are considering hosting this event again.



## Drive-Thru Food Drive - November & December 2020

In November, HC MUD 217 partnered with Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and the Houston Food Bank on our first-ever Drive-Thru Food Bank. The Houston Food Bank provided enough perishable and non-perishable food to feed more than 700 area families, despite a refrigerator breakdown at their main warehouse facility. As we go to print, your HC MUD 217 Board of Directors is planning a second food drive for December.



# District Improvements

The District recently voted to undertake some much needed renovations and maintenance to the Administration Building, while it is temporarily closed. The building's offices, entrance, conference room, and gym are receiving a fresh coat of paint. New flooring needs and kitchen updates are also being completed.

Along with the Administration Building improvements, District residents can soon enjoy updates to the park! HCMUD 217 is in the planning stages of erecting an aesthetically designed concrete wall around the District detention pond which will also enhance security for park users and improve privacy for Heritage Village residents whose yards back up to the park. Improvements will also be made to the current wrought iron fence at the park to update the appearance and provide additional

safety. New ramps within the park will be installed to facilitate access and mobility in and around the trails. The Board of HC MUD 217 is excited to provide these enhancements for the community! Please check our website regularly for updates to the park projects.

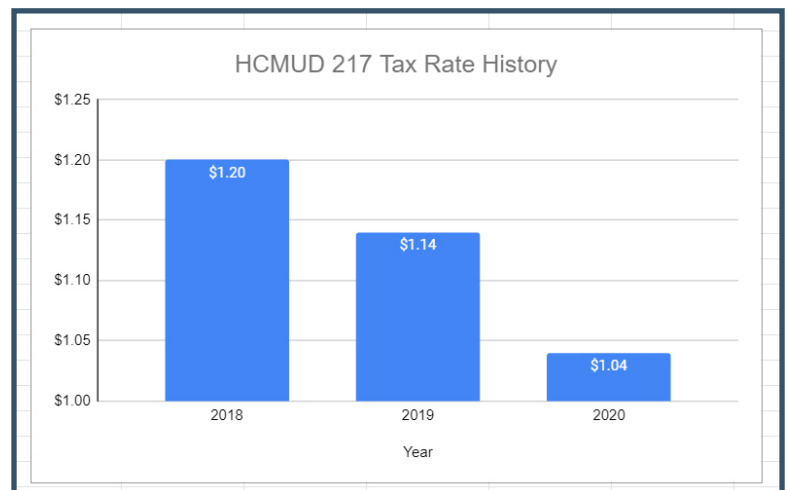


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## 2020 TAX RATE AND EXEMPTIONS

*The Board of Harris County MUD 217 approved a **REDUCED** tax rate for 2020. The new rate is \$1.04 per \$100 of valuation. The new rate was REDUCED from \$1.20 in 2018 and \$1.14 in 2019, or a 13.3% decrease over the past two years.*

Did you know that Harris County MUD 217 also offers a \$15,000 property tax exemption for residents who are over 65 and/or disabled? The exemptions reduce the property tax burden for homeowners in these specific groups. The \$15,000 exemption equates to a savings of \$156 a year on a \$100,000 home. To qualify for an exemption, please visit the State of Texas Comptroller's website for more information and to download an application.



***Exemptions must be filed with the Appraisal District by May 1, 2021.***

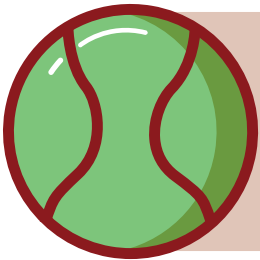
***[www.comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/property-tax/exemptions/](http://www.comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/property-tax/exemptions/)***

# Leash Law



**The District takes the safety and security** of its residents very seriously. One measure that we continue to emphasize is adherence to the Harris County Leash Law. There seems to have been an increase in dogs running freely around our neighborhood. We ask you, our residents, to please make sure your beloved pets are secure in your home or back yard and when going on walks, please keep them on a leash.

The Leash Law was enacted to help ensure the safety of children and passersby. Harris County Animal Control states that “all dogs and cats must be kept under restraint while in the unincorporated areas of Harris County, Texas.” This means that dogs and cats are not allowed to roam freely and must be kept under direct control (on a leash) by their owner. Our pets are beloved members of our families, but we are all required, by law, to keep them on a leash.



If you would like to let your dog run freely, unleashed, there are two dog parks nearby:

Meyer Dog Park: [www.hcp4.net/parks/meyer/dogpark/](http://www.hcp4.net/parks/meyer/dogpark/)

Bibi and Mini-Me Bush Dog Park: [www.hcp4.net/parks/pundt/dogpark/](http://www.hcp4.net/parks/pundt/dogpark/)

Residents are permitted to bring their pets to our neighborhood park, Heritage Park, but pets must be kept on a leash at all times (no exceptions).

## When to call Animal Control

If you see any dogs around the neighborhood without a leash or their owner nearby, please call Animal Control. Our off duty patrol officers will not be able to assist you.

**Animal Control can be contacted at 281-999-3191.**



For more information: [Publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Resources/Animals-and-Pets/AnimalLaws](http://Publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Resources/Animals-and-Pets/AnimalLaws)

# Winter Planting & Irrigation Tips



As we settle into the cooler, shorter days of winter, we tend to spend more time indoors, but the relatively warm Houston winters mean you can still have a beautiful yard. In fact, the cooler, drier weather gives you a chance to experiment with new plants. There are a number of annuals that do especially well in Houston's mild fall and winter climate. This is also the time to adjust the blade height on your lawn mower. While the summer heat meant thicker turf would help prevent scorching in the sun, grass is more resistant to frost when it is kept short and watered less frequently. It's a great chance to both conserve water and save money on your water bill.

When deciding which plants to choose, your best bet are native Texan plants. They will be stronger, heartier, and provide more long-lasting beauty than non-native species. We've included a few of our local favorites.

## Annuals

**Snapdragons:** While technically annuals, Snapdragons can survive a mild winter and bloom well into late spring.



Their colorful stalks offer a bright splash of color in your garden and are a pretty complement to other fall foliage. Snapdragons are also known to attract hummingbirds during their spring migration.

**Lobelia:** With adequate watering, lobelia thrives



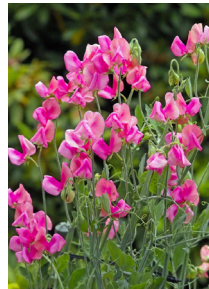
in Texas fall and winter. Its deep blue color stands out beautifully in a flower bed or container.

**Pansies:** Available at every garden center, pansies are a great low-maintenance option for fall



planting. They come in a wide range of colors to complement any garden plan.

**Sweet Peas:** If you are looking for a fragrant option for your garden, look no further than Sweet Peas. These annuals also come in a range of colors and can be planted in the fall or you can use seeds for early spring blooms.



## Perennials

### Blue Plumbagos:

The perfect choice for a full sun spot, Blue Plumbagos transition from blue to deep violet through the fall with very little maintenance.



### Chrysanthemums:

Chrysanthemums are a favorite in every fall garden and thrive in full sun with regular watering. Their bold colors scream fall and are pretty in a bed or in your favorite container.



### Autumn Joy Sedum:

Autumn Joy Sedum is a great option for groundcover in your landscaping. Its dusty pink blossoms turn more reddish as through the fall and its seeds are a favorite snack for local birds.



Happy planting!

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**Text YES to (832) 610-2511 or visit  
[www.hcmud217.com/alerts](http://www.hcmud217.com/alerts) for Resident Alerts**

*We recommend at least two people per household sign up to receive resident alerts. If at any time you want to opt out of the alert system, simply reply "stop" to be removed from the system.*

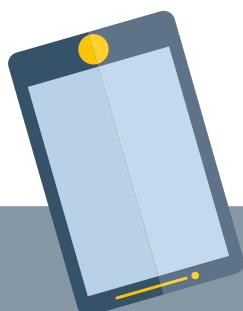
For any other questions or comments regarding the MUD and its functions, please visit our website or contact [hcmud217.com](mailto:hcmud217.com)

### Situation

Emergency (Life Threatening, Eminent Danger)  
Report a Criminal Act  
File a Complaint (nuisances & other misdemeanors)  
Report Suspicious Persons or Activity  
Water or Sewer Issues (WWWS)  
Garbage Service (WCA)  
Heritage Park Matters (MUD217)  
MUD Admin Bldg Events  
Animal Control

### Number

911  
911  
713-221-6000  
[mud217sec@gmail.com](mailto:mud217sec@gmail.com)  
281-895-8547  
281-368-8397  
832-249-7000  
832-993-3191  
281-999-3191



# NUMBERS TO KNOW