

## **WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT OCTOBER 2, 2020**

### **City Manager**

It is with great pleasure that I step in to the role of City Manager in Punta Gorda. Having spent a little over a month shadowing Howard Kunik and working with staff, I have been able to get up to speed quickly on all of the projects and people that make Punta Gorda such a great small city. I am looking forward to all aspects of the management challenges and opportunities that this job brings. Howard has led this community with integrity and helped build a place that truly is a treasure. From the canals, to the historic component, to commercial development, to residential growth, to the City Center, and on and on. I am excited for the opportunity to use the infrastructure and amenities that Punta Gorda has to offer to help continue the development of the City and more specifically, City Center. I have tackled similar projects in my previous position, and it will be very exciting to see what can occur as we move forward with the Council's goals to enhance this beautiful part of the City even more. I look forward to these possibilities becoming a reality.



I am proud that throughout my 35 year career I have been able to accomplish many things that led to our jurisdiction becoming a model in the region. That could not have happened without a dedicated team that I was fortunate enough to help develop and lead. They are always who I look to and what I am most proud of as they work to serve our community. The backbone of the organization; the employees that work hard day after day to accomplish the goals we set out to achieve. They deserve credit for all they do every day. Fortunately, Howard has done a great job of cultivating a similar culture of employee engagement and excellence here in Punta Gorda already, and I look forward to the challenge of continuing to inspire each of our employees to reach new levels of performance to benefit the community as a whole.

I have always said that in a job like this it is not if you are working, just where. The information is always filling your thoughts and there is always something to discuss with someone. I plan to continue the open door policy that Howard has with employees and the community. I am always available. That being said, when not "at work" I like to spend my time with family and friends, on the water. I have a Master Captain credential and enjoy both big water and smaller rivers and streams. All present their own brand of fun and excitement. The ambiance and food of a good restaurant often call my name as well, and I am quickly learning there are many to enjoy.

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the elected body and residents of Punta Gorda as part of a hard working team of 292 employees. It is a trust that I do not take lightly. My door is always open and my phone always on. I look forward to being involved with the community, and getting to know the people who live here so that together we can help move the City forward and enjoy what it has to offer.

- **Face Covering Ordinance** – Given the fact that the population of Punta Gorda is the second oldest demographic in the United States, residents are at significant risk if they contract the coronavirus and develop COVID-19; and given that the Center for Disease Control recommends the wearing of masks in places where social distancing is not possible, the decision was made to keep the City of Punta face covering ordinance in place with a moratorium on enforcement of the penalties for not wearing a mask. This will remain as a requirement of law in the City of Punta Gorda, while bringing the Ordinance into compliance with the Governor’s mandate.



Keep in mind that the Ordinance has exemptions including;

- Children under the age of two (2) years;
- Persons observing social distancing;
- Persons for whom a face covering would cause impairment due to an existing health condition or for whom compliance with the mandatory requirements imposed herein would conflict with the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Persons communicating with an individual who is hearing impaired who needs to see the mouth of the person speaking to facilitate communication;
- Persons while working in a business or profession who do not have interactions with other persons;
- Persons while working in a business or profession where use of a face covering would prevent them from performing the duties of the business or profession;
- Persons exercising, while maintaining social distancing;
- Persons while eating or drinking, provided they are maintaining social distancing. It is the intent of this provision that a face covering must be worn while traversing an Indoor Public Place for ingress and egress, when walking to and from restroom facilities, and while standing when unable to maintain social distancing;
- Public safety, fire and other life safety or health care personnel, as their personal protective equipment requirements will be governed by their respective agencies or employers;
- Persons who are engaged in obtaining a service involving the nose or face for which temporary removal of a face covering is necessary to perform the service;
- Persons engaged in an activity where some other form of face covering is required pursuant to the regulations of the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration

A business or organization can create their own rule requiring masks. If a patron refuses to follow the rule the business owner or manager can call the Punta Gorda Police Department and request to have the patron trespassed.

- **City Council Meeting** – City Council will meet on Oct. 7 at 9 a.m. at Historic City Hall. Some of the agenda items of interest included:
  - Discussion regarding Cooper Street Multi-Use Recreational Trail design and construction. On Oct. 16, City Council awarded a contract for professional engineering services to design the Cooper Street Multi-Use Recreational Trail (MURT) and design plans are currently at 60% completion. During the 1% Local Option Sales Tax project discussion held April 1, City Council allocated \$991,000 in Tier 2 for construction. City staff is seeking direction on whether or not to move forward with the design as it may be several years before funding becomes available for this project.

- Discussion of exceptions related to residential noise regulations. The Punta Gorda Code contains provisions which limit building construction and certain property maintenance activities to specified hours in residential neighborhoods. Due to increased complaints about noise, there has been a request for City Council to review these regulations.
- Discussion regarding Gilchrist Park Phase B. If built as designed the improvements would include Retta Esplanade diagonal parking, intersection treatments, parking lots at Gilchrist Street and the playground area, walkway connections and landscaping and require an additional investment of approximately \$957,000. Four other options for parking reconfiguration and cost estimates will also be discussed.

### Upcoming Events

- Fishermen’s Village Events – available at <https://www.fishville.com/events/>
- Military Heritage Museum Events – available at <https://freedomisntfree.org/upcoming-events/>.
- Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce Events – available at <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce Events – available at <https://business.charlottecountychamber.org/events>

### Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed mowing in the following areas:
  - Colony Point (Colony Point Dr., W. Marion Ave., Socorro Dr., and Coronado Dr.).
  - PGI (Bal Harbor Blvd, Deborah Drive, Ryan Blvd, Suzi Street, and Casey Key Drive).
  - PGI ( Magdalina Drive, Via Vento, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive).
  - PGI Bird Section (Almar Drive, Albatross drive, Whippoorwill Blvd, and Turtle Dove Blvd).
  - Downtown and Historic District (W. Marion Ave., W. Olympia Ave., Shreve St., and Harvey St.)
  - East Side and the area behind Dunkin Donuts (E. Marion Ave, E Olympia Ave, Narranja St, E Henry St, and Cooper St).
  - Burnt Store Isles (Monaco Dr, Tripoli Blvd, Madrid Blvd, and Macedonia Dr).
  - Burnt Store Meadows (Areas of Tamiami Tr., N. Blue Sage, S. Blue Sage, Royal Poinciana, and Gold Tree).

### Urban Design

- **The Planning Corner Comprehensive Plan Elements Update –** Most communities across the United States have some sort of vision plan. This vision plan defines how a community sees itself in the future and loosely defines how it can get there. The City of Punta Gorda’s vision plan is [Plan Punta Gorda 2019 Citywide Master Plan](#). The City also has a Comprehensive Plan. Beginning in the mid-1980’s the State of Florida required every City and County have a [Comprehensive Plan](#). The initial [Florida Statue](#) that mandated the Comprehensive Plan requirement was known as the Growth Management Act. The intent of this Act was to develop an integrated planning system at all levels of government, local, regional, and state. As such these local Comprehensive Plans are required to meet certain minimum standards, have a basic common structure, and be updated regularly. The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (FDEO) is the State agency tasked with reviewing local Comprehensive Plan updates and coordinating the State’s planning activities. In addition to FDEO local government Comprehensive Plan updates are reviewed by other state agencies and local/regional governments including the following:



- [Florida Department of Environmental Protection \(FDEP\)](#)
  - Lead state agency for environmental management & stewardship
- [Florida Department of State](#)
  - Lead state agency for corporations, cultural affairs, elections, historical resources, and library& information services
- [Florida Department of Transportation \(FDOT\)](#)
  - State agency responsible for the construction and maintenance of the state's transportation network
- [Regional Planning Council](#) (regional government)
  - Florida is composed of 10 regional planning council areas
  - The councils are designed to foster regional cooperation for planning, emergency management and other interests of specific regional interest
  - Punta Gorda is within the [Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council](#) area
- [Water Management District](#) (regional government)
  - Florida is composed of 5 water management districts with each district area defined by a major watershed area of the state
  - Punta Gorda is within the [Southwest Florida Water Management District \(SWFWMD\)](#) – often pronounced as “swift-mud”)
- County government
  - [Charlotte County](#)
  - Punta Gorda is the only incorporated City in Charlotte County

All of these agencies, regional, and local governments have say in the City of Punta Gorda's Comprehensive Plan update, through their responsibility to review and comment on the plan. However, the most important plan reviewer is the Community, which through our elected officials on City Council have the ultimate review and approval authority for our Comprehensive Plan updates. The first drafts of these updates will be published to the [City's website](#) and the [Plan Punta Gorda](#) website this week and next.

## **Public Works**

### **Canal Maintenance**

- **FY 2020/2021 Seawall Replacement Program** – The list of properties scheduled to have their seawalls replaced in fiscal year 2020/2021 has been posted to the Canal Maintenance Website. Notices have already been sent to residents that will have work performed on their seawalls starting in Oct. 2020. Residents can expect to receive a notice in the mail approximately six weeks prior to construction. It is highly recommended that property owners contact the contractor to discuss how to prepare the property for construction. Contact information is provided in the notice.
  - As we begin the next Seawall Replacement Work Program, property owners may be curious about the process and what to expect. There is a series of informational videos on the Public Works - Canal Maintenance website <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/canal-maintenance/canal-maintenance-video-series> that will inform you “How to prepare your Property for Seawall Replacement”; “Seawall Replacement Process”; and “Manufacturing of Seawall Panels”. Please contact Cathy Miller, Canal Maintenance Supervisor, with any questions or concerns at (941) 575-5050.
  - Crews filled depressions at 22 locations.
  - Crews performed 16 seawall cap and seam patches (163' linear ft.).
  - The contractor completed mangrove trimming along the Burnt Store Isles perimeter canal.

## Engineering

- **ADA Improvements City Hall Annex** – The second floor men’s room is complete. The third floor men’s restroom and the 3rd floor break room construction continue. This work is tentatively scheduled to be completed by mid-November.
- **Harborwalk (Gilchrist Gazebo to Berry St.)** - A Substantial Completion walk-through was held Wednesday, Sept. 30. A punch-list was developed to complete the project. This section of the park is open to pedestrians and cyclists. Final completion for project documentation, completion of punchlist items and turn over to the City is Oct. 30.



- **FDOT - US 41 Carmalita Street to Marion Ave. within City of Punta Gorda** - The Florida Department of Transportation’s contractor, Highway Safety Devices, continues work to install new signals on US 41 from Carmalita St. to Marion Ave. The construction will take place Monday through Friday during daytime and nighttime/overnight hours, weather permitting. Lane closures may occur during daytime hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For complete details, contact information and map <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/engineering>.
- **Shreve St. MURT Lighting** - Staff continues coordination efforts with concrete, electrical and directional drilling contractors for this project between History Park and the Airport/Pompano intersection.
- **Sullivan Street Renovation to Historic Bricks** - Placement, grading and rolling of crushed concrete base rock continues. Demolition of select existing curb is complete. Concrete curb placement is to be scheduled. The Sullivan Street renovation will require this section to be closed to all traffic until Nov. 2020. Travelers are requested to use extreme caution while workers are present in the right of way and allow additional time for travel while work is performed. Temporary delays are to be anticipated. For information please contact Linda Spósito, Sr. Project Manager, Public Works Department at (941) 575-5060 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday or <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/Home/Components/News/News/3231/17>.

## Police Department

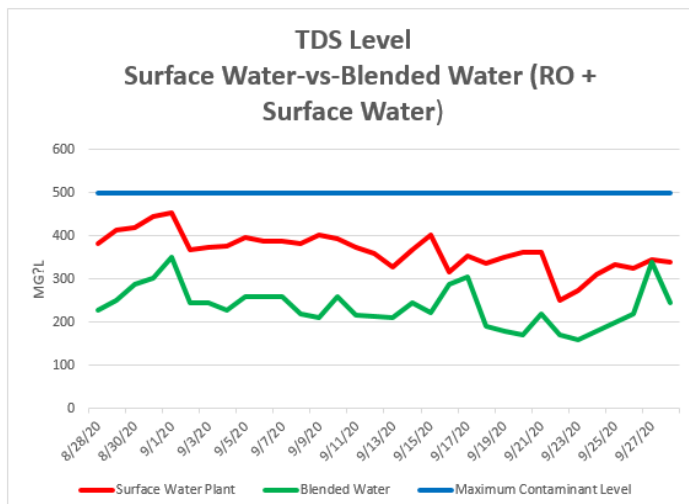
- **Vehicle Burglaries** – Did you know that nearly every vehicle burglary that occurred in Punta Gorda in the last year involved an unlocked vehicle? Most criminals that come into our city to commit vehicle burglaries ignore locked vehicles. The best way you can avoid becoming a victim is to make sure your vehicle doors are locked and valuables are removed from your vehicle.
- **Police Officer Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Dept. is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Jan. 11 with oral board interviews scheduled on Jan. 12 and Jan. 13. Currently we are only accepting applications from candidates who are currently certified, Equivalency of Training (EOT) eligible, or law enforcement academy students.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. Testing will be held on Jan. 19.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Spring Semester of 2021. Our internship program is open to college students and high school seniors interested in gaining educational experience in law enforcement, criminal justice, and small government administration. To apply for any of these positions or for more information please visit [www.pgdjobs.com](http://www.pgdjobs.com) (941) 575-5571 or [employeedevelopment@pgorda.us](mailto:employeedevelopment@pgorda.us) for additional information or to have an application package sent.

## Fire Department

- **Don't let your guard down** – According to the Weather Channel, Florida is the state most likely to see a landfalling hurricane in October. Since, 1950, 16 hurricanes have made U.S. landfall in October, with nine of those happening in Florida. In South Florida, October is the month with the most hurricane direct hits. Hurricane Matthew and Hurricane Michael were both late season storms that causing significant storm surge and damage in Florida in October. Fortunately, November has only seen three known U.S. hurricane landfalls since 1861.

## Utilities Department

- **Ground Water RO Update** – Maximum total dissolved solids (TDS) allowable is 500



## **Water Treatment Plant Operations**

- 48 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.9 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Sending water at a rate of two million gallons per day, started July 13.
- Rainfall in Sept. 2019 0.08” Sept. 2020 8.10” Oct. 2019 5.02” Oct. 2020 0.00”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 5 ppm – Total hardness 86 ppm
- TDS for Oct. 1 – Current 188 ppm, Low 227 ppm, High 407 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 323 ppm
- Reservoir Oct. 1 – Current 5.81’, Record Low 5.04’, Record High 6.67’, 55 Year Avg. 5.56’

## **City Clerk**

### **Current Board and Committee Vacancies ([Volunteer Appointment Information Form](#))**

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (Two alternates) Meets the 4th Tuesday at 4 p.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms - maximum of three terms. Financial disclosure required. Makes recommendations to City Council on variances to City Code.
- **Building Board** – (One alternate) Meets the 4th Tuesday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers – City residency not required. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Four members must be involved with the building industry and three members must be consumer advocates who are not, nor ever have been, involved with building industry. Makes recommendations to City Council on the minimum qualifying requirements for obtaining Certificates of Competency in the various construction trades and the fees for same. Periodically reviews and holds public hearings on all building, electrical, plumbing, housing, gas, fire prevention and other related codes. Reviews enforcement of all codes relating to construction standards and acts as condemnation board in matters of violation of minimum standards. Hears alleged complaints against contractors.
- **General Employees Pension Board** – Meets quarterly and as called in Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents, two general employees and one at-large as appointed by the Board. Four year terms – no maximum. Financial disclosure required. Charged with management of the General Employees’ Pension Fund.

### **New Businesses**

- All persons, firms or corporations engaging in business or occupation within the City of Punta Gorda are required to obtain a Local Business Tax (LBT) Receipt in accordance with Chapter 12 of the Punta Gorda City Code. As part of our effort to promote economic development and vitality in our area, we offer the following list of new or transferred business within our community this week:
  - Florida Urology Physicians, 100 Madrid Blvd, Unit 113
  - Gulf Coast Urology, 713 E Marion Avenue, Suite 135
  - Quigley Eye Specialists, 2529 Tamiami Trail
  - Theodore Yaremo MD PA, 150 W McKenzie St, Suite 117