



Florida's Harborside Hometown

Weekly Highlights Report December 4, 2020

City Manager

- **From the Desk of the City Manager Greg Murray** – The holiday season looks a little different this year, but there is still so much to be thankful for. I am thankful for so much in the City of Punta Gorda. Thankful to work with a City Council that cares about our citizens. Thankful that our Public Works department has made our community so attractive for the holiday season. Thankful that our Police and Fire departments worked together to keep residents safe during Hurricane Eta and beyond. Thankful that Utilities provides us with safe drinking water every day. Thankful that Finance works hard to maximize the impact of every tax dollar for residents. Thankful that the Urban Design department is working to make sure we preserve the hometown feel of Punta Gorda into the future. Thankful for the many Administrative services that support our city and residents, knowing that all 292 employees are working hard every day to accomplish the goals of the city.



Beyond city operations the list of things to be thankful for continues. Thankful for the many non-profits, and faith based organizations that continue to help residents during this difficult time. Thankful for the businesses that drive our economy. Thankful for the quality healthcare services available here. Thankful to live in a community that has so much resident engagement. Thankful for a future that looks bright for our community.

This bright future includes an abundance of ways to enjoy the holidays in Punta Gorda. The magic of lights appeals to the youthful spirit of all. Don't miss checking out the traditional Punta Gorda Christmas Tree illuminating the "Christmas Tree corner" of West Marion and Taylor Street. Bring your camera to take part in the numerous photo opportunities provided by the Punta Gorda Tree Lighting Committee. The festive cutouts line West Marion Avenue and are perfect to capture the smiling faces of your loved ones. The committee is also selling holiday cards at the Visual Arts Center to raise funds for a new tree.



Fisherman's Village is a favorite stop to enjoy the Festival of Lights in an open air complex featuring shopping, dining, entertainment and unique accommodations. Over one million lights and holiday themed Christmas decorations are on display for viewing free of charge through Dec. 31. Also available at Fishermen's Village are the ever popular King Fisher Fleet Christmas Light Canal Tours. These family orientated one-hour cruises tour the residential canals to view Christmas lights, displays and decorations on homes, boats seawalls and docks from the comfort of a double-decker tour boat. Tickets are required and can be purchased online or while visiting Fishermen's Village.

Christmas Card Lane courtesy of the Punta Gorda Kiwanis Club and the Kiwanis Club of Punta Gorda-After Hours is another long standing holiday tradition in Punta Gorda. Gilchrist Park will play host to a delightful display of beautiful seasonal greeting cards produced on signboards where everyone is invited to view the cards while enjoying the



beauty of Charlotte Harbor. This is just a small sampling of all we have to look forward to during the holidays in Punta Gorda. I hope everyone had a safe and happy Thanksgiving and have taken the time to thank those that make their life just a little brighter.

- **City Council Meeting** – City Council met on Dec. 2 at 9:00 a.m. at the Historic City Hall. There is not a second meeting in December. Council will resume meetings on Jan. 6, 2021. A few items of interest from the Dec. 2 meeting include:
 - Adopted an ordinance to prevent left turns from Cooper St. onto E. McKenzie St. during school drop off and pick up times to improve safety for motorists and pedestrians traversing the area.
 - Adopted an ordinance containing the new rates, fee and charges association with provision of water and wastewater services in the Punta Gorda Utility Service Area.
 - Approved an application from Harbor Social to close a portion of Sullivan St. from W. Marion Ave. to the alley adjacent to the Women’s Club for a grand opening celebration on Jan. 23 from 2 p.m. until 6 a.m. on Jan. 24.
 - Park and Recreation Master Plan status update was received focusing on Level of Service (LOS) determinations.
 - Staff presented the results of the sign survey and requested direction from Council on how to proceed with the rewrite of the sign code. Council provided the following direction for staff to move forward with the rewrite. All signs will be regulated only by number, size and placement, not by content.
 1. Residential yard signs
 - a. Limited to 4 signs per parcel
 - b. Each sign shall not exceed 4 square feet in area
 - c. Each sign shall not exceed 3 feet in height
 2. Commercial freestanding signs
 - a. Number shall not exceed 5 signs per acre
 - b. Each sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area
 - c. Each sign shall not exceed 6 feet in height

Staff will revise the draft ordinance and the next steps will be to take to the Planning Commission for discussion and then back to City Council with the additional comments provided by the Planning Commission and public. Once additional comments are received by the Planning Commission and public, the draft will be brought back to City Council for final discussion before advertising for Public Hearings beginning with Planning Commission and then City Council for adoption.

The meeting is available for viewing on the City’s YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6_Kqw?view_as=subscriber.

Upcoming Events

- Fishermen’s Village events can be accessed at <https://www.fishville.com/events/>
- Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce events can be accessed at <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce events can be accessed at <https://business.charlottecountychamber.org/events/calendar>
- Dec. 4 and 5, Premier Auto Auction, Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, 75 Taylor St. For additional information, visit <https://www.premierauctiongroup.com/auction-calendar>
- Dec. 5 and 6, Peace River National Art Festival, Laishley Park. For additional information, visit <https://visualartcenter.org/pages/peace-river-national-art-festival-prnaf>
- Dec. 5, City Wide Garage Sale, Bal Harbor Plaza, 1133 Bal Harbor Blvd. For additional information, visit <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Dec. 12 and 13, Holly Jolly Market, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For additional information, visit <https://daniellesblueribbonevents.com/>
- Dec. 24, Deep Creek Christmas Eve Service and Music Event, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For additional information, visit <https://deepcreekcommunitychurch.com/christmaseveinfo>
- Dec. 24, First United Methodist Church Live Nativity and Christmas Eve Service, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For additional information, visit <https://www.whatis1st.com/>
- Jan. 8-10, MY Promotions Snowbird Celebration Arts & Craft Show, City Marketplace property, 115 Tamiami Tr. For additional information, visit <http://www.mypromotions.com/>
- Jan. 9, Punta Gorda Chamber City Wide Garage Sale, 1133 Bal Harbor Blvd. For additional information, visit <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Jan. 16, Peace River Pride Festival, Laishley Park. For additional information, visit <https://www.allrainbowandalliedyouth.org/pride>

Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed mowing the following areas:
 - 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** – At the Nov. 4 City Council Meeting, the City’s consultants, Dover, Kohl & Partners, presented the first draft of updates to the City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan. These updates are part two of a three part project that began with Plan Punta Gorda 2019 Citywide Master Plan. Part three of this project will be an update to the City of Punta Gorda Land Development Regulations (LDR). The LDRs govern all new development and redevelopment within the City. At their Dec. 2, meeting City Council provided staff with direction to pause the Comprehensive Plan update in order to begin the update of the Land Development Regulations (LDR). By advancing the LDR update the community will have a better opportunity to understand potential impact of the proposed changes on the shape of the City. Once there is community consensus on the types, scales, and shapes of development that may be permitted by these proposed updates, then the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Regulations can be brought to City Council for the formal adoption process.



As part of the continuing outreach process seeking public input City staff made a brief presentation about the Comprehensive Plan update to the Punta Gorda Historic District Civic Association at their meeting on Dec. 2. The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer period. Over the coming months City staff will be reaching out to other community groups to provide similar presentations either in person or virtually (via Zoom or similar platform). If you know of a group who would like to participate please contact Urban Design at urbandesign@cityofpuntagordafl.com

Public Works

Administration

- **Citizens' Academy** – Applications are still being accepted for the upcoming Citizens Academy 2021 Session <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/i-want-to/register-for/citizens-academy>. This academy is a free, eight session course of interactive classes designed to provide insight into City government and to develop future leaders through well informed and civically engaged residents. There are still six spots available. The deadline for registration is 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 28. For more information, please contact Public Works Senior Executive Assistant, Jennifer Daumann at (941) 575-5002 or jdaumann@cityofpuntagordafl.com.



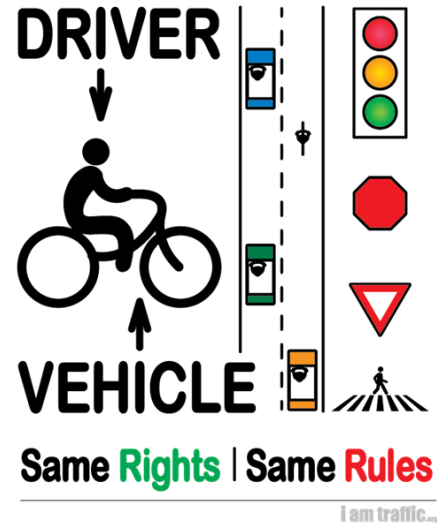
Canal Maintenance

- **Dredging Ponce Inlet** –The Ponce De Leon Inlet is scheduled to be dredged thru Dec. 11 (weather and equipment operation permitting). The contractor will off load dredge material at the vacant lot at the southerly end of Colony Point; then the material will be transported to another location by dump trucks. For information on this project, please contact Canal Maintenance Supervisor, Cathy Miller, Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 between the business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Mon. thru Fri. For more information [Ponce Inlet Dredging Press Release](#).
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has four projects under construction in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. There are two seawall replacement projects currently underway in Burnt Store Isles. Four seawall replacement projects are scheduled for Burnt Store Isles this fiscal year. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
 - Crews filled depressions at 21 locations.
 - Crews manufactured 30 (10' ft. each) seawall panels.
 - Crews removed one piling from the canal.

Engineering

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvements City Hall Annex** – Construction is near completion. The project is scheduled to be completed in Dec.
- **Gilchrist Park Pier Deck Replacement** – Construction start date is pending.
- **Laishley Park ADA Ramp** – Construction is complete. Landscaping, mulch and final clean-up remains.
- **Ponce De Leon Park Boat Ramp and Fishing Pier Closure** – The boat ramp and fishing pier at Ponce De Leon Park will be closed for seawall panel repairs on Thur. Dec. 10. If there are no weather or construction delays the Ponce De Leon boat ramp and fishing pier will reopen on Fri. Dec. 11.

- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety** – Any person who is walking or running is considered a pedestrian. Pedestrians are required to utilize sidewalks whenever they are available. If a sidewalk is available pedestrians may not walk in the roadway or on the shoulder of the road. If a sidewalk is not available, Florida law allows pedestrians to walk/run on the side of the roadway (or the shoulder), but pedestrians should use the left side of the roadway and walk/run facing oncoming traffic. An individual on a bicycle may ride either on the sidewalk or in the roadway. When riding on a sidewalk, bicyclists are considered pedestrians and should follow the same rules as someone walking/running. This includes utilizing crosswalks appropriately, following pedestrian crossing signals, etc. When riding in the roadway, bicyclists are considered vehicles and have the same rights as all other vehicles and must follow the same rules as all other vehicles. This includes stopping at stop signs and traffic signals, yielding for pedestrians in a crosswalk, yielding when entering the roadway, and riding on the right side of the road with the flow of traffic.



- **Holiday Safety Tips** – When you are out for the evening this holiday season remember to do the following to stay safe and keep from becoming a victim of crime:

- Make sure that doors and windows are closed and locked;
- Leave lights and a TV turned on so it appears that someone is still home;
- Keep gifts and valuables where they cannot be seen through windows or make sure that window coverings are closed;
- If you make be drinking alcohol while you are out, designate a sober driver, plan on calling a taxi, or utilize a ride sharing service. Never drive when you are intoxicated, even buzzed driving is drunk driving.



- **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 current 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 Summer & Fall Semesters 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 (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.

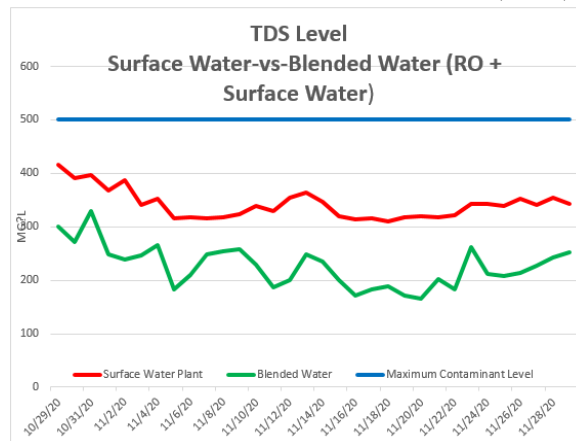
Fire Department

- **Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)** – The fire department conducted ACLS training last week. This is a recertification class all members must take every two years. ACLS provides guidelines for health care providers in regards to medication administration and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). The course provides new updates provided by the American Heart Association, who updates ACLS procedures based on research and outcomes over a two year period.



Utilities

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



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 43.7 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.2 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 450 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 550 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall in Nov. 2019 .80” Nov. 2020 4.70” Dec. 2019 1.10” Dec. 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 7 ppm – Total hardness 112 ppm
- TDS for Dec. 3 – Current 193 ppm, Low 193 ppm, High 540 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 430 ppm
- Reservoir Dec. 3 – Current 5.26’, Record Low 4.90’, Record High 5.60’, 55 Year Avg. 5.15’

Wastewater Collection

- Excavation has started on the gravity sewer replacement in the alleyway near the Ice House Pub. During excavation crews discovered what appears to be old cart tracks similar to train tracks. Back in the early 1900’s the carts were used to carry ice from the old Ice House to the fishing boats at the end of Nesbit St. which is now Laishley Park. Just a reminder, the alley way that runs from E. Olympia Ave. to E. Virginia Ave. including the alleyway at Nesbit St. will be closed due to sewer line work until Dec. 18.



City Clerk

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

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (Two alternates) Meets the fourth 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 fourth 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.
- **Utility Advisory Board** – Meets the fourth Monday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven-member board. Three-year terms – maximum of two terms. Makes recommendations to City Council with regard to, but not limited to, revisions to the utility construction standards, alleged billing discrepancies and review of utility specifications.

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:
 - Chelsea Place Home Care, 126 E Olympia Avenue, #301
 - Sisco Southern Properties Vacation Rental, 158 Colony Point Drive