



Florida's Harborside Hometown

Weekly Highlights Report December 11, 2020

City Manager

- **From the Desk of the City Manager Greg Murray** – A heartfelt welcome to our new and returning seasonal residents in Punta Gorda. One of the best ways to learn more about the city operations is to participate in the Citizen's Academy. This 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. It gives citizens an up-close and personal look at how city government functions and helps shape our community. During the eight sessions, participants become informed about the role and responsibility of the various city departments and services provided to the community. Presentations and facility tours provide a better understanding of the part Punta Gorda City government plays in the quality of life that residents enjoy. Citizens Academy sessions take place the second and fourth Tuesday of the month beginning in January through May. Only three spots are still remaining. As a relatively new resident myself I'll share a few helpful hints that I have learned as I have acclimated to life in this wonderful community:
 - The city's name is pronounced "Punt-a, Gord-a," Not, "Poont-a, Gord-a".
 - Residential sanitation services are provided twice weekly on either Tuesday and Friday or Wednesday and Saturday based upon the home address. The collection schedule can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/y3xc87ec>.
 - Two of the main thoroughfares through the center of town Marion Ave. and Olympia Ave. are one way. Please use caution and make sure you are turning the correct way on these streets.
 - Vehicle registration and drivers licensing are handled by the Tax Collectors Office located at 410 Taylor St. in Punta Gorda.
 - The City of Punta Gorda requires facial coverings in indoor places that do not allow for social or physical distancing.
 - Parking in the Herald Court Center garage is free of charge.
 - The city has requirements for landscaping. A booklet detailing those requirements is available at <https://tinyurl.com/y2g2hkm9>.
 - The city has Homeowner's Guide to Code Compliance available at <https://tinyurl.com/y47g2awh>.
 - The Welcome to Punta Gorda Life brochure is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yy43c7tw>.
 - A wealth of information about your new hometown is available at <https://www.cityofpuntagordafl.com> or by calling our offices at (941) 575-3302.



I think you will find that you will enjoy (or continue to enjoy) living here. Punta Gorda is the one Florida municipality that offers the best of American small-town attributes, in what may be the state's most picturesque, enjoyable and accessible waterfront destination. This is a laid back community where residents know one another, engage with one another and enjoy life together in a relaxed tropical, Harborside destination. Welcome to your new Harborside Hometown.

- **City Council Meeting** – City Council held a special meeting on Dec. 9 at 10 a.m. to discuss the FY2021 Legislative Agenda. After considerable discussion a decision was reached to remove the Punta Gorda Airport (PGD) public/private partnership initiative (PPP) as a legislative priority for the City. 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.
- **Charlotte County Legislative Delegation** – Mayor Matthews, Vice-Mayor Carey, Councilmembers Prafke, Cummings, and Miller, the City Manager and the City's lobbyist Jerry Paul attended the Charlotte County Legislative Delegation meeting on Dec. 10 on behalf of the City. The City presented one item for consideration by the delegation seeking the Delegation's assistance with obtaining funding for the construction of drainage improvements in the Boca Grande Boulevard area. Design is nearly complete for this project which will improve the quality of life for one of our neighborhoods in need.
- **Holiday Displays** – In addition to the displays mentioned in previous weeks, be sure to visit Hector House Plaza to see the beautiful "yarn-bombing" created by the Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association's In Stitches Knitting Club.
- **Gilchrist Park Tennis Courts** – Harbor Style Harbor's Hottest Awards 2020 named Gilchrist Park the 1st place Best Place to Play Tennis.



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>
- Military Heritage Museum events can be accessed at <https://freedomisntfree.org/#>
- Dec. 12 and 13, Holly Jolly Market, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For additional information, visit <https://daniellesblueribbonevents.com/>
- Dec. 19, Saturday Night before Christmas Eve Lighted Boat Parade, PGI Canals. For additional information, visit <http://puntagordaboatparade.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 will begin a new mowing cycle on Dec. 14.

Urban Design

- **Charlotte County Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** – City staff attended the regular board meeting of the MPO. The MPO Board is composed of elected officials of the City, County and Airport Authority. The MPO's purpose is to provide a forum to provide policy direction regarding the expenditure of Federal and State transportation funds. To learn more about the MPO please visit their website at: <https://ccmpo.com/wp/>.
- **Rabbits** – Have you seen rabbits in your area? It is important to note that relocating an animal may not only give someone else a nuisance problem, but spreads diseases, such as rabies and distemper, Lyme disease and West Nile virus. Handling wildlife may also put you at risk for disease. If an animal must be removed, call a qualified nuisance wildlife controller.
- **The Planning Corner** – Over the past few weeks in the Planning Corner, a lot of information has been shared about the comprehensive plan process and identifying the proposed changes. At their Dec. meeting City Council directed staff to pause the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan begin the process of preparing for new Land Development Regulations. The shift to the Land Development Regulations (LDR) is designed to increase the comfort level that the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan will provide a development pattern which aligns with the community's vision.



Within the downtown and surrounding historic neighborhoods the draft LDR are intended to be Form Based Codes (FBC). All LDR focus on three interrelated topics, namely Form, Use/Density/Intensity, and Management. Conventional Land Development regulations focus primarily on Use/Density/Intensity, then Management, with Form generally dealt with as a series of abstractions like setbacks, open space requirements, and similar metrics that are easy to measure through a bureaucratic process. Because these metrics are abstractions, the results of development can vary widely. FBC by contrast are primarily focused on the form or shape and character that development takes resulting in development that is more predictable.

Having been around for approximately 20 years and used in communities large and small throughout the United States and around the world, FBC are well established and time tested. The success or failure of establishing FBC are driven by a firm understanding of a community's vision. In a process called "calibration" the standard structure of a FBC is focused on meeting the specific vision of a community. FBC are designed to operate at many scales all at once; neighborhood by neighborhood, street by street, block by block, even down to how one lot or building should be unique from another. For more information please visit the FBC Institute: <https://formbasedcodes.org/definition/>.

While the Comprehensive Plan updates are on pause, City staff is still seeking public input on the proposed changes. The current draft documents are available for review and comment at the following locations on the web: Plan Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan update website <https://www.puntagordamasterplan.com/engage>; City of Punta Gorda website: <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/comprehensive-plan/plan-punta-gorda-comprehensive-plan-update> or Email: urbandesign@cityofpuntagordafl.com. City staff looks forward to hearing from you about the future of our great community.

Public Works

Administration

- **Citizens' Academy** – Only three spots left for the upcoming Citizens Academy 2021 Session <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/i-want-to-register-for/citizens-academy>. The deadline for registration is 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 28. For information, please contact Public Works Senior Executive Assistant, Jennifer Daumann at (941) 575-5002 or jdaumann@cityofpuntagordafl.com.



Canal Maintenance

- **Dredging Ponce Inlet** – The dredging operation has been completed. However the contractor is still restoring the staging site.
- **Seawall Assessment** – Beginning Mon., Dec. 14, City staff will be performing the Annual Seawall Assessment during low tide periods until Feb. 2021. City staff will be inspecting seawalls from the waterside while traversing canals in a boat. Residents may see City staff in a boat close to their seawalls while inspecting the condition of seawalls.
- **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 25 locations.
 - Crews manufactured 21 (10' ft. each) and six (12.5'ft each) seawall panels.
 - Crews removed one piling from the canal.
 - Crews patched 61' linear feet of seawall.

Engineering

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvements City Hall Annex** – Project is complete with final payment to the contractor pending.
- **Gilchrist Park Pier Deck Replacement** – The supplier has indicated the materials have arrived at their facility. Coordination with the contractor is occurring with project kick-off meeting scheduled next week.
- **Laisley Park ADA Ramp** – Railing installation is complete and the ADA ramp is open for use.
- **Palm Ave. and Chasteen St. Intersection to McGregor St. Road Closure** - Beginning the week of Jan. 4 through April 30 (weather permitting), construction is scheduled to commence on Palm Avenue from the Chasteen St. intersection to McGregor St. The project will be phased starting with the road closure between the project limits, historic street brick removal and staging. The Utilities Dept. will then begin removal and replacement of underground water/service and sewer lines mid-Jan. to the early part of Feb. (weather permitting). Upon completion and formal award a contractor will mobilize to complete: road bed stabilization, curb and ADA ramp replacements, asphalt base, final sand- in and bricking replacement. Travelers are requested to use extreme caution while workers are present in the right of way. Allow additional time for travel due to detours while work is performed. Temporary delays are to be anticipated. For information [Engineering | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/engineering) or contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager, Public Works Department at (941)575-5050 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. thru Fri.

- **Ponce De Leon Park Seawall Repairs** – Tie-back repairs and installation of new seawall panels is complete. Seawall cap installation at new panel locations will begin next week. During construction the beach area as well as the seawall between the beach and fishing pier will be closed. The contractor will accommodate the public by leaving sections of the beach area open when possible. Construction is anticipated to be completed in Mar. 2021.
- **Charlotte County Lane Closure on U.S. 41 Bridges over Peace River** - Intermittent lane closures will occur on the U.S.41 northbound and southbound bridges from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. beginning Mon., Dec. 14 until Fri., Dec. 20 for routine roadway lighting repairs and the installation of Charlotte County Centennial banners. Travelers may experience intermittent lane closures, slow-moving traffic and/or temporary delays and should allow extra time when planning to travel through this area. Charlotte County Public Works Department reminds motorists to remain alert at all times and to exercise caution when traveling in the vicinity of construction zones. For information, contact Tracy Doherty at (941)575-3643 or Tracy.Doherty@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

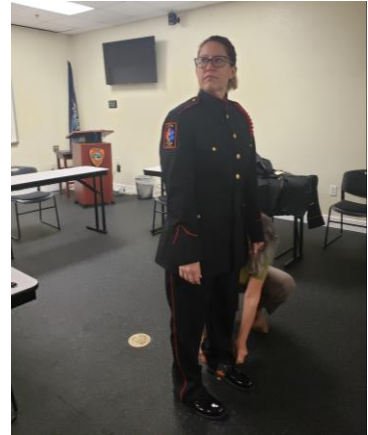
Police

- **Holiday Safety Tips – Here are some other tips for keeping safe this holiday season:**
 - The holidays are the ideal time for package thefts. Have packages delivered where someone will be able to retrieve them, such as your workplace or a neighbor or family member’s house. You can also ask the post office to hold your packages until you are able to pick them up yourself;
 - After the gifts have been opened, avoid advertising the valuables inside your home by putting out empty boxes for televisions, computers, or other expensive items. Instead break down boxes and packaging and put them in garbage cans or bags.
 - Criminals often prey on people’s generosity during the holiday season by soliciting for “charitable donations” either door-to-door, by phone, or online. Only do your holiday giving directly to legitimate charitable organizations that you know and trust.
- **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 and 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.pgjobs.com (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.



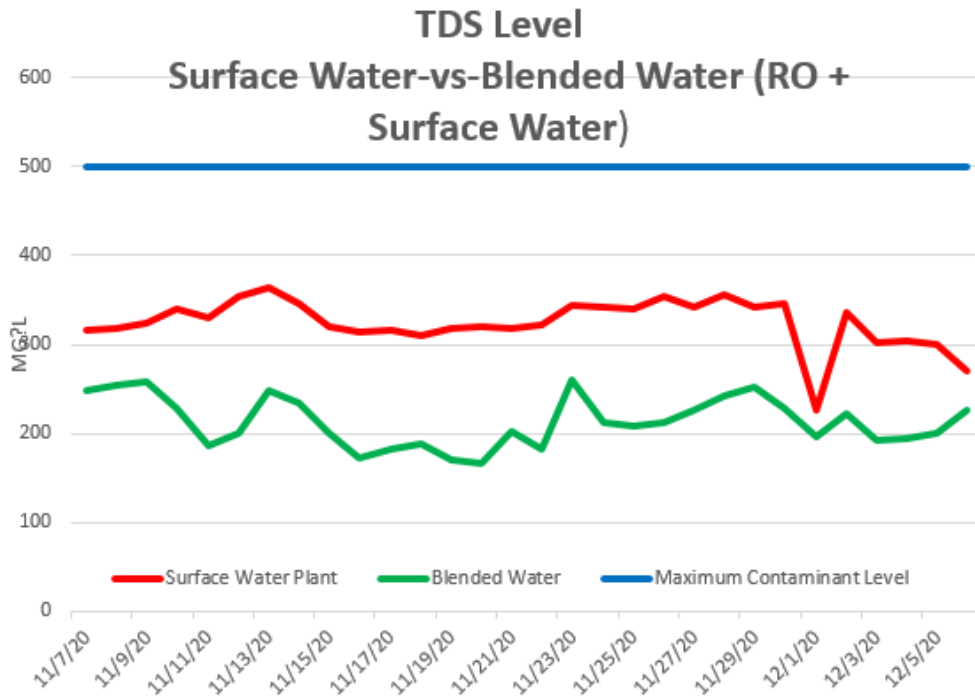
Fire Department

- **Honor Guard** – The Punta Gorda Fire Department is finalizing the final orders to complete the making of their own Honor Guard team. The 7 member team was just recently sized for their new uniforms. The Honor Guard serve the last honors for fallen veterans, and first responders. They also participate in Veteran’s Day/ Memorial Day parades and other select events. Keep an eye out for them at future events.



Utilities

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



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 47.1 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.7 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 Dec. 2019 1.10” Dec. 2020 1.00”
- 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 92 ppm
- TDS for Dec. 10 – Current 180 ppm, Low 180 ppm, High 556 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 429 ppm
- Reservoir Dec. 10 – Current 5.29’, Record Low 4.80’, Record High 5.97’, 55 Year Avg. 5.15’

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:
 - GMan Home Watch, 1840 Aqui Esta Drive
 - TM Enterprise, 418 Milus Street