



Florida's Harborside Hometown

## Weekly Highlights Report December 18, 2020

### City Manager

- **From the Desk of the City Manager Greg Murray** – Each day in Punta Gorda has provided the opportunity to apply previous experiences and learnings to the work of the City Manager's office. Many things about the way the city operates are similar to other municipalities. However, there are some things that are pretty unique to the City of Punta Gorda.



The Fire Department will change your smoke detector batteries. As with most cities the function of the Fire Department is to protect lives and property through fire prevention, medical life support, fire suppression, hazardous materials response/identification, water rescue, and other emergency incidents during both natural and man-made emergencies in the most effective, professional and efficient manner possible. Many of the homes and condos in the city have very high ceilings. This makes changing the smoke detector batteries a dangerous feat for many residents. There were a number of calls for emergency medical service calls as a result of accidents occurring while changing out batteries. As a result Chief Briggs put in place a program that sends out Fire Department personnel to change out resident purchased batteries in those hard to reach places. This service can be accessed by calling the non-emergency phone number (941) 575-5529.

Another unique benefit to living in Punta Gorda is the seawall replacement program. Seawalls are maintained from funds collected for the Canal Maintenance Assessment District. Funds are used to maintain and/or replace seawalls, inlets and navigable channels, channel markers and mangroves in common areas. The city has 109 miles of seawall and was able to replace approximately 10 miles after Hurricane Irma in only 18 months. There are still residents in other communities that have not been able to schedule the repair work for their seawalls – whether it be cost issues or scheduling issues. The city pays approximately \$325 a lineal foot to replace seawalls. The city has an annual contract and is able to replace seawalls before they completely fail with a proactive seawall assessment program. This includes a custom seawall maintenance program developed in-house by a City employee assisting with the program.

The Volunteers in Policing Program (VIP) takes volunteering in the field of public safety to a whole new level. The VIP program has more than 63 active volunteers who assist in nearly every component of the police department including patrol and traffic, marine patrol, bike patrol, records, community services, criminal investigations, community garden management, fingerprinting, the police pension board, and more. The bike patrol itself is one of only a few in the country and provides patrol services on trails, near attractions, in our parks and downtown.

The City of Punta Gorda has a history of being innovative and developing new programs to better serve our residents. This open minded approach to new opportunities is one that I too value. We will continue to explore opportunities that align with Punta Gorda's vision to continue to preserve our small-town character while promoting diversity, economic development and sustainability.

- **Christmas and New Year's Holiday** – The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on Thurs., Dec. 24 and Fri., Dec. 25 for Christmas holiday and Fri., Jan. 1 for New Year's holiday. Due to Christmas Day falling on Friday, this holiday closure **WILL** affect residential refuse, yard waste and recycling collections. It will also affect commercial customer collections. Please refer to the schedule listed below for all services; including household trash, yardwaste and recycling:
  - **Friday Household Trash:** Residents with Fri. household trash collections will have no pickups on either Fri., Dec. 25 or Fri., Jan. 1. The next collections for these residents will be on Tues., Dec. 29 and Tues., Jan. 5.
  - **Friday Household Yardwaste:** Residents with Fri., Dec. 25 yardwaste collection will have their yardwaste collected on Thurs. Dec. 24. Residents with Fri., Jan. 1 yardwaste collection will have their yardwaste collected on Thurs., Dec. 31.
  - **Friday Household Recycling:** Residents with Fri., Dec. 25, recycling collection will have their recyclables collected on Sat., Dec. 26. Residents with Fri., Jan. 1 recycling collection will have their recyclables collected on Sat., Jan. 2.

For the disposal of real Christmas trees, place tree at the curb for collection on your regular yardwaste day. All decorations and lights should be removed before placing the tree out for collection. Artificial trees will be collected on your regular household trash day. If you have any questions, please contact the Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. thru Fri.

### 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. 17, Classic Drive-in Movie Night, 1133 Bal Harbor Blvd. For additional information, visit <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- 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. 23, Rumble on the River Boxing Event, Marketplace property, 115 Tamiami Tr. For additional information, visit <http://www.smuggersevents.com./>
- Jan. 23, Church of the Good Shepherd 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, 401 W Henry St. For additional information, visit <https://goodshepherdpuntaorda.dioswfl.org/>

## Lot Mowing Program

- **The City has completed mowing the following areas –**  
Colony Point (Colony Point Dr., W. Marion Ave., Socorro Dr., and Coronado Dr.).  
PGI (Bal Harbor Blvd., Deborah Dr., Ryan Blvd., Suzi St., and Casey Key Dr.).  
PGI (Magdalena Dr., Via Vento, W. Henry St., Appian Dr., and Columbian Dr.).  
PGI Bird Section (Almar Drive, Albatross drive, Whippoorwill Blvd, and Turtle Dove Blvd).  
The remaining sections are scheduled to be completed by Dec. 19

## Code

- **Signs in the Residential Zoning Districts –** At the Mar. 18 City Council meeting, Council voted to not enforce sign regulations for signs on residential lots in the Right Of Way or otherwise until such time as the sign ordinance was amended. This includes political signs/flags. The sign ordinance is in the process of a rewrite at this time. Staff brought the sign survey results to City Council as a presentation on Dec. 2. Staff has received direction that until the new sign code is adopted, there will be no enforcement of the sign regulations on residential lots or rights-of-way. This includes political signs/flags.

## Urban Design

- **The Planning Corner –** At their December meeting City Council directed staff to pause the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan and begin the process of preparing for new Land Development Regulations (LDR). The shift to the LDRs is designed to increase the communities comfort level regarding the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan. While last week's Planning Corner introduced the concept of Form Based Codes (FBC), this week Urban Design Staff want to explain the difference between the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Regulations.



## What is a Comprehensive Plan?



The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for planners, public officials, municipal department leaders, and citizens to achieve the community's goals. In the State of Florida, all counties and municipalities are required to have a comprehensive plan which contains various Elements (chapters) that cover a variety of topics relevant to the functioning of that government. Each Element is required to have two major sections. The first section is data and analysis which details all the relevant information on a specific topic. The second section lists various goals, objectives and policies or "action items" that assist elected/appointed officials in implementing the day to day functioning of the City.

## What are Land Development Regulations?

In contrast to the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Regulations are focused on the short term. Land Development Regulations set forth the specific rules that govern how every piece of land within the City can be used. These rules specify how close to the public street a building can be located; how big (width, length, height) it can be; what uses can be undertaken within it; and govern exterior features upon private properties, (permitting or not outdoor storage, fences, parking, and landscape). The specific rules found within Land Development Regulations govern how private property owners and developers use and develop land. In short, these rules help shape and reshape the City over time. While the Comprehensive Plan updates are on pause, City

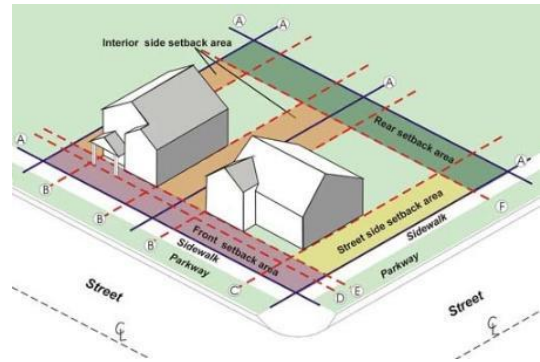
staff is still seeking public input on the proposed changes. The current draft documents are available for review and comment at the following locations on the web:

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> Email City planning staff directly:

[urbandesign@cityofpuntaordafl.com](mailto:urbandesign@cityofpuntaordafl.com) City staff looks forward to hearing from you about the future of our great community.



Minimum side yard is 5 feet.

Minimum rear yard is 15 feet; abutting a street, 10 feet.

Minimum setback from water areas is 25 feet.

Minimum lot width at the street, 25 feet.

Minimum lot width at the setback line, 40 feet for single-family residence; 60 feet for all other uses.

## Public Works

### Administration

- **Citizens' Academy** – We are no longer accepting applications at this time, Citizen's Academy 2021 is full!

### Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Assessment** – Beginning the week of Dec. 14 through Feb. 28 (weather and equipment operation permitting), the annual seawall assessment is scheduled. During low tide periods City staff will be inspecting the seawalls in the northwest and northeast zones of Punta Gorda Isles. The boundaries of these zones are Aqui Esta Dr., Colony Point Dr., Charlotte Harbor and Magdalena Dr. 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.
- **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 16 locations.
  - Crews manufactured 32 (10' ft. each) and eight (12.5' ft each) seawall panels.
  - Crews are in the process of conducting yearly seawall assessments for PGI.

- **Odor from Canals** – In the past few weeks there have been a number of calls reporting the smell of what seems to be sewage in some of the canals within the city limits of Punta Gorda. Rest assured this is not a sewer line break, but a natural phenomenon. Almost every year, as cooler weather moves into Southwest Florida the canal water ‘flips’ or ‘turns’. This means that the bottom (including silt, decomposing plant material and miscellaneous debris) comes to the surface bringing with it a smell of stagnant water and debris, while the surface water goes to the bottom. This is a natural occurrence and typically happens in dead end canals. This occurrence is expected to only last approximately two weeks then returns to normal.

## **Engineering**

- **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 Dec. 16 until Dec. 19 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](mailto:Tracy.Doherty@CharlotteCountyFL.gov).
- **Gilchrist Park Pier Deck Replacement** – The project kick-off meeting is complete. A media advisory is to be prepared for construction anticipated to begin on Jan. 19 through Feb. 12.
- **Palm Ave. and Chasteen St. Intersection to McGregor St. Road Closure** - Mobilization is scheduled to commence with the bricks removal and Utility work during the months of early Jan. and Feb. 2021 (weather permitting). Based on bid award approvals; the curb replacements, Americans with Disability Act ramp, road base, asphalt, sand and re-placement of historic street bricks are to follow completion of Utility work. The project is tentatively scheduled to occur between the months of Jan. 2021 through April 2021. For information [Engineering | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](http://Engineering|CityofPuntaGorda,FL(punta-gorda.fl.us)) 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.
- **Paving Program Street Resurfacing** - A purchase order has been issued to the contractor for the Fiscal year 2021 paving program. The signed Statements of Work have been received. Staff is in the process of preparing the Media Advisory which will list the streets to be milled and resurfaced commencing on Jan. 4 through Jan. 15, 2021, weather depending.
- **Ponce De Leon Park Seawall Repairs** – Installation of the cap on new seawall panels is complete. The contractor will be working on tie-back repairs, deadman installation and rip-rap placement during the week of Dec. 21. 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 March 2021.

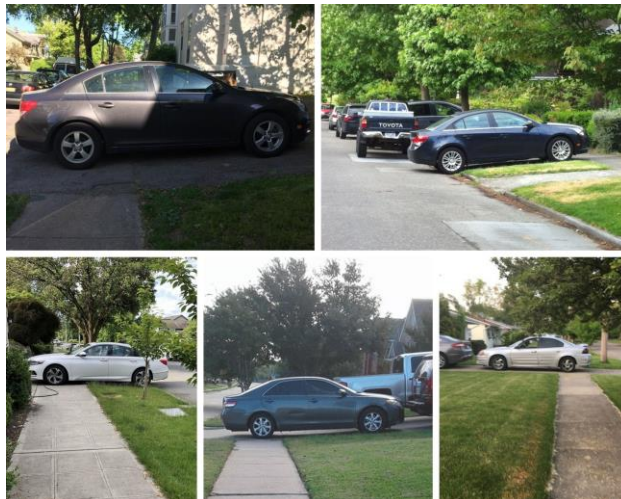
## **Police**

- **VIP Program** – The Volunteers In Policing (VIP) program contributed a total of 531 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during the month of Nov. 2020. Our volunteers are an absolutely vital part of this police department and we appreciate them greatly! Members of the community interested in volunteering with the police department are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at [vip@pgorda.us](mailto:vip@pgorda.us) or (941) 575-5536.

- **Southwest Florida Police Chief's Association Awards** – Members of the Punta Gorda Police Department were recognized this week during the annual Southwest Florida Police Chief's Association (SWFPCA) award ceremony. Chief Pam Davis was recognized as the Outstanding Law Enforcement Chief Executive of the Year for her leadership, innovation, and vision, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Accreditation and Administrative Services Specialist, Kaylee Licata, was recognized as the Civilian Member of the Year for, among other accomplishments, procuring nearly \$300,000 in grant funding for the police department, the most the department has ever received in a single fiscal year.



- **Blocking Sidewalks** – Just a reminder that Florida law prohibits parking your vehicle in a way which blocks any public sidewalk, even if you are parking in a driveway. Blocked sidewalks create a safety concern for pedestrians who are forced to walk in the roadway and may make it impossible for those with mobility concerns (such as someone in a wheelchair) to travel along the sidewalk. Please be courteous and make sure the sidewalk is clear for pedestrians. Blocking sidewalks could result in fines.



- **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.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

- The Punta Gorda Fire Department reminds residents as you deck the halls this holiday season, be fire smart. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly.
  - ✓ When picking a tree choose a tree with fresh, green needles
  - ✓ Before placing the tree cut off 2” at the base of the trunk
  - ✓ Keep tree at least three feet away from any heat source
  - ✓ Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit
  - ✓ Add water to the tree stand daily
  - ✓ Use lights that are for the indoors and never use candles
  - ✓ Turn off Christmas tree lights at night and when leaving home

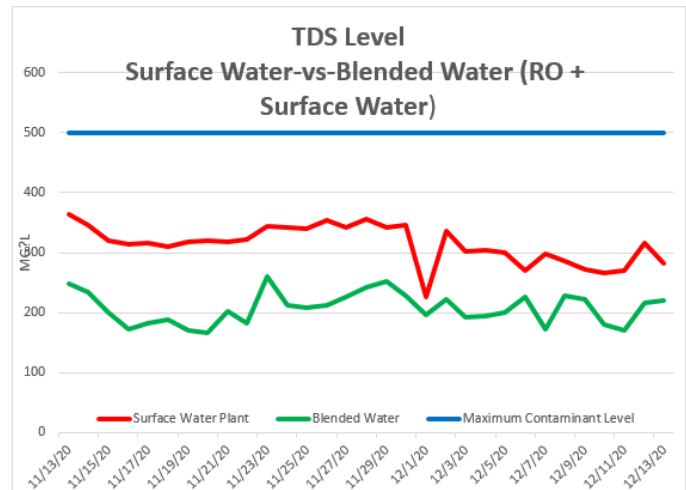


### **After Christmas**

- ✓ Get rid of the tree after Christmas or when it is dry.
- ✓ Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home.
- ✓ Check with your local community to find a recycling program.
- ✓ Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

## Utilities

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



## **Water Treatment Plant Operations**

- 46.5 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.6 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 1.50”
- 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 88 ppm
- TDS for Dec. 17 – Current 212 ppm, Low 212 ppm, High 568 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 443 ppm
- Reservoir Dec. 17 – Current 5.26’, Record Low 4.70’, Record High 6.61, 55 Year Avg. 5.17’

## **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:
  - All in One Hair, 3941 Tamiami Trail, #3115
  - AWA Investment Advisors, 1107 W Marion Avenue, #112
  - Fish Aglow LLC, 48 Tropicana Drive
  - Harbor Social, 212 W Marion Avenue
  - True Love Tattoo, 318 Tamiami Trail, #227
  - Wollaston Vacation Rental, 114 McGregor Street