



Florida's Harborside Hometown

Weekly Highlights Report December 31, 2020

City Manager

- **From the Desk of the City Manager Greg Murray –New Year's Holiday** – This has been a year unlike any other for our employees, our citizens, loved ones and businesses facing challenges that have impacted us all both personally and professionally. The 292 employees that serve our over 20,000 residents have risen to the occasion and created new ways to provide solutions to the challenges that 2020 has dealt. As one of the newest members of our team, I feel honored to have been given the opportunity to work with each of our employees to keep our city running smoothly. Each of us may be a different part of the machine, but all are just as important to make the machinery operate.



We are also fortunate to have a Punta Gorda City Council that is well respected, and members whom are concerned about our citizens, the employees, the businesses we support, and our community as a whole. They are truly engaged with the process to help make our city an even better place. The support they give allows city staff to provide efficient and effective services to the City, and also security for our families and loved ones.

The contributions of our staff have not gone unnoticed by others as well. Chief Davis was recently awarded the Chief Executive Officer of the Year award from the Southwest Florida Police Chief's Association (SWFPCA). Chief Davis took a very aggressive approach to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the Punta Gorda Police Department had the right people in the right places to make the department safer, obtaining the necessary supplies, and implementing a wide variety of changes to our organization to diminish the risk to staff and the community. In addition to the pandemic, 2020 also brought unprecedented protests and, in some cases, riots to parts of the nation. While historically we do not see protests or only minor marches in our community, Punta Gorda was not spared from community activism and marches. The city saw two separate marches, the first with over 1000 participants and the second with over 500 participants. And while most of our officers have never participated in such activities, Chief Davis brought her decades of experience to the forefront, meeting with event organizers, working with command staff in setting up our responses, and ensuring that our officers protected the constitutional rights of the marchers.

Another PGPD employee, Kaylee Licata, Accreditation and Administrative Services Specialist was also recognized. She was awarded the Civilian Officer 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.

These recent accolades are just two examples of the great work being done every day in every department to serve our community. We routinely receive accolades for each department, and even more notable recognition is on the horizon for the City employees that serve you. You are in capable hands and we are very proud of their accomplishments.

As 2020 draws to a close, I look forward to working more closely with citizens, staff and stakeholders in the new year. We have a bright future here in the City and can look forward to a new year with new opportunities as we move forward together.

- **The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on Jan. 1 for New Year's holiday.** Due to New Year's 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, yard waste and recycling:



- **Friday Household Trash:** Residents with Fri. household trash collections will have no pickups on Fri., Jan. 1. The next collections for these residents will be on Jan. 5.
- **Friday Household Yard waste:** Residents with Fri., Jan. 1 yard waste collection will have their yard waste collected on Dec. 31.
- **Friday Household Recycling:** 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 yard waste 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. through Fri.

- **COVID-19 Vaccines** – Florida Department of Health Charlotte County has started scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations for those 65 years of age or older and front line medical personnel. Appointments for Dec. 30 and the week of Jan. 4-8 are now full. Check back for additional availability after Jan. 6. Appointments can be made at www.coadfl.org.
- **City Council meeting** – City Council will meet on Jan. 6 at 9 a.m. at the Historic City Hall. A sampling of items on the agenda include;
 - Community Redevelopment Authority update
 - FY2020 to FY2021 budget reappropriations and FY2021 appropriations
 - Comprehensive Plan pause to focus on land development regulations
 - Appropriation of priority 1 % sales tax projects
 - New communications tool TextMyGov
 - Continued discussion of signs in the right of way
 - FY2021 progress report on Capital Improvement Projects
 - Discussion on enhancing retail gas pump security measures

The complete agenda will be available at [Agendas & Meetings | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.cityofpuntaorda.com/Agendas-&Meetings) and the meeting will be live streamed at [City of Punta Gorda - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) .

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/#>
- 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./](http://www.smuggersevents.com/)
- Jan. 23, Church of the Good Shepherd 125th Anniversary Celebration, 401 W Henry St. For additional information, visit <https://goodshepherdpuntagorda.dioswfl.org/>
- Jan. 30, Smuggler’s Chili, Beer & Blues Festival, Marketplace property, 115 Tamiami Tr. For additional information, visit <http://www.smuggersevents.com./>
- Feb. 6 and 7, The Invitational at Punta Gorda Arts & Craft Show, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For additional information, visit <https://daniellesblueribbonevents.com/>
- Feb. 7, Local Ladies Social Network Vendor Craft Fair, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For additional information visit, <https://www.ilsnevents.com/>

Lot Mowing Program

- **The City has completed mowing the following areas** – All zones completed.

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 ROW 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 – Understanding Zoning**

What exactly is zoning and what is its purpose? Zoning is the legislative process for dividing land into zones for different uses. Zoning laws are the laws that regulate the use of land and structures built upon it. In the City of Punta Gorda, the Zoning and Code Compliance Division enforces zoning regulations to protect the health, safety and well-being of all who live and work in the City. Zoning activities are guided by the City’s Land Development Regulation (LDR) and the City Code of Ordinance. Zoning laws regulate the impacts of land use that may not be in the best interests of the people, generally including such things as:



- Protecting the value and enjoyment of properties by separating incompatible land uses and minimizing their potentially negative impacts upon each other
 - Protecting the value and enjoyment of properties by allowing a property its most appropriate land use given its location and surrounding uses
 - Providing for the orderly development of a city, including making provisions for land uses in the best interests of its citizens, and
 - Providing adequate public infrastructure, e.g., roads, potable water and sewer services
- How Does Zoning Protect Land Values and Why is Zoning Important?

- Predictable Use of Adjacent Properties – Zoning districts prevent commercial businesses or industrial buildings from being scattered between residential homes.
- Uniformity in lot development – Zoning ordinances establish building heights, setbacks and prevent lots from being irregular sizes. Property values benefit when similar structures are built near each other and in an orderly fashion, so zoning classifications may protect property values.
- Prevents Adverse Built Conditions on Adjacent Properties – Zoning establishes height limitations, lot coverage, setbacks, and fence heights. These standards keep buildings from being built too close to a neighbor’s property and prevent fences so tall that they overshadow your yard.
- Requires Compatible Land Uses – Zoning regulations protect property values by adding predictability to residential neighborhoods ensuring that properties are used in a compatible way with the zoned area.
- Appearance – Zoning regulations aim to improve the appearance of certain areas, thereby increasing overall property values because the area looks nicer.

To learn more about Zoning or have any questions visit the City of Punta Gorda website:

<http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/comprehensive-plan/plan-punta-gorda-comprehensive-plan-update> or Email City planning staff directly at urbandesign@cityofpuntafordafl.com City staff looks forward to hearing from you about the future of our great community.

Building

- **From Chief Building Official Randall L. Cole** – Effective Jan. 4, the City of Punta Gorda will be processing plan review and permitting under the 2020 Building Codes for all trades. If you have a bona fide contract dated prior to Jan. 1, please include a copy with your permitting package to be reviewed under the 2017 Building Codes. If you have any questions, please contact our office at (941) 575-3324 for assistance.

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Canal Odor** - 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.
- **Seawall Assessment** – Beginning 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 and two projects completed in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. There are three 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 12 locations.
 - Crews manufactured 30 (10' ft. each) seawall panels.
 - Crews removed one palm frond from the canal.

Engineering

- **Gilchrist Park Pier Deck Replacement** – Construction is anticipated to commence on Jan. 19 through Feb 12.
- **Palm Avenue and Chasteen Street Intersection to McGregor Street 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, ADA 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 thru Apr. 2021. For information [Engineering | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](#) or contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager at (941)575-5050.
- **Ponce De Leon Park Seawall Repairs** – Placement of rip-rap at the north end of the project will be complete by Jan. 8 (weather permitting). During the week of Jan. 4, the contractor has indicated that they will complete the epoxy coating of the seawall cap. Backfilling of the seawall along the beach and clean-up of the beach area will reach substantial completion by Jan. 15. The project is on track to be completed by the end of Feb. 2021.
- **Paving Program Street Resurfacing** - The media advisory has been issued with a complete list of streets to be milled and resurfaced the week of Jan. 4 through Jan. 22 (weather and equipment operations permitting). For complete list of streets [Paving Program January 2021](#). For information contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager at (941) 575-5060.

Police

- **New Year's Eve Enforcement** – The Punta Gorda Police Department will be conducting additional DUI enforcement throughout the city for New Year Eve. If you will be drinking, make arrangements to have a designated driver, plan on using a ride share service like Uber or Lyft, take a taxi, or stay within walking distance. **Think before you drink!**
- **Police Officer Testing** – The police department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Apr. 19 with oral board interviews scheduled on Apr. 20 and Apr. 21. Currently we are only accepting applications from candidates who are currently certified, Equivalency of Training (EOT) eligible, current law enforcement academy students, or those with prior experience in a law enforcement related field.
- **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 Apr. 26.
- **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 (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.

Fire Department

- **Christmas Cheer** – The 2020 Christmas Cheer fundraiser was very successful thanks to generous donations from City staff, Walmart, Publix, Charlotte Harbor Parrot Head Club, American Legion Riders Club, Chick-Fil-A and the Nazarene Church food pantry staff in Punta Gorda. This year the program gave 175 students at the Baker Center School each a winter coat, family meal, holiday book, a Chick-Fil-A card for a kid’s meal and a Christmas wish toy. There were so many additional toy donations this year that five local daycares were each provided Christmas toys for children in need. In addition, gifts were provided to a local group home of intellectually disabled women and a foster home of five children. Many families and children were able to smile and feel a little relief this year because of programs like Christmas Cheer that give in a time of need. Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, for supporting Christmas Cheer.



Utilities

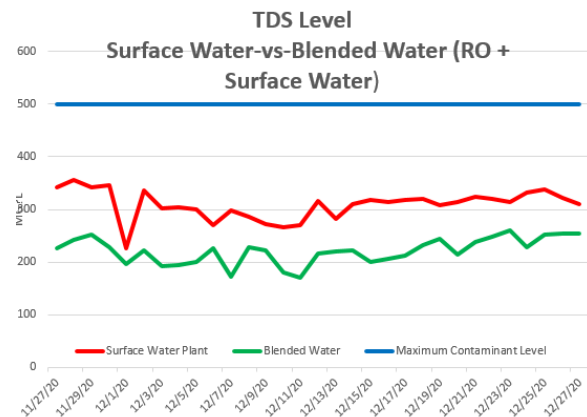
- **Ground Water RO Update** – Maximum total dissolved solids (TDS) allowable is 500

Utility Billing and Collections

- **Water Impact and Meter Set Fees** – Changes to water impact and meter set fees go into effect Jan. 1. Please contact the Billing and Collections office at (941) 639-2528 for a quote prior to remitting payment.

Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 45.1 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.4 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 2.80”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 6 ppm – Total hardness 108 ppm
- TDS for Dec. 30 – Current 218 ppm, Low 218 ppm, High 589 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 468 ppm
- Reservoir Dec. 30 – Current 5.26’, Record Low 4.90’, Record High 6.03, 55 Year Avg. 5.16’



City Clerk

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

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (Two regular and 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.
- **Punta Gorda Isles Canal Advisory Committee** – (Two regular) Meets the third Monday at 1:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be a resident of Punta Gorda Isles. Seven member board. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council on effective maintenance of existing canals, waterways and navigable channels within the district, together with the maintenance and reconstruction of seawalls. Holds public hearings and makes final decision on petitions for special permit to the provisions of Section 6-6(c) of the City Code.

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:
 - Estate Sales and Liquidation, 1869 Manzana Avenue, Unit 201
 - Hope Family Adult Day Care, 204 East McKenzie Street, Unit A
 - LeBeau Construction Inc., 230 Bal Harbor Blvd, Unit 112
 - Keenan Vacation Rental, 530 Medici Court