



Florida's Harborside Hometown

Weekly Highlights Report January 8, 2020

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – As 2020 closed it was a natural time of reflection on the challenges and successes of the year, as well as the excitement and hope for 2021. All of the actions of the city over the past year and all of the actions slated in 2021 are developed to fulfill the city's mission to preserve and enhance Punta Gorda's identity as a vibrant waterfront community, unique in character and history; and as a desirable place to live, work and visit.



The waterfront is an absolutely vital asset to the city and our residents. 2020 saw several key enhancements to the waterfront and waterways. Buckley's Pass was completed under budget and opened to boat traffic early this year. City Council approved a new land lease for the Punta Gorda Boat Club allowing their programming to continue to be offered that creates many boating opportunities for residents. As a part of this lease the club will also implement a number of façade improvements to the building. Also completed was the rewrite of chapter six of our Code of Ordinances that governs the use of seawalls, docks, canals, waterways and canal maintenance.

Our character and history focus are reflected in the care taken to enhance Veterans Park. Through partnerships the grounds were remodeled to provide the atmosphere of beauty, care, and respect that our Veterans have earned, and there is much more to come. That focus on character and history is also demonstrated in the rebricking projects such as Sullivan Street that was completed this year.

There is much work ahead of us in 2021, and our focus on the waterfront and history will continue. Gilchrist park renovations with additional parking will provide ease of access for our residents and visitors. Ponce Park seawall work and pier improvements will aid in preservation of the precious park land and enhance access to the waterfront. The Historic City Hall renovation and rehabilitation project will move into the design phase to ensure this important asset is preserved into the future. New land development regulations are slated to be created that allow us to plan for future growth and development while keeping Punta Gorda's place as the one Florida municipality that offers the best of American, small-town attributes in the state's most picturesque, enjoyable waterfront destination.

Together City Council and city staff will work hard every day to continue to preserve our small town character while promoting diversity, economic development and sustainability. This means we will preserve and enhance our historic small town and its' self-sufficient community character. It means Punta Gorda will be an economically stable four-season community and cultural hub of Charlotte County. Our focus will remain on being a safe and secure community. We will continue to be a place where residents and visitors recognize the significance and character of its waterfront amenities, natural resources and vibrant downtown. Punta Gorda will have a financially sustainable city government.

All of this is also accomplished through partnerships and collaborations with all sectors of the community that embody Punta Gorda's ability to sustain our small town, self-sufficient character. The future looks bright for 2021 as we continue our work to be the best small city to live, work and visit.

- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday** - The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on Jan. 18 for Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Residents of the City of Punta Gorda will notice **no change** in their trash, yard waste or recycling collections during this holiday. Commercial customers of the City of Punta Gorda will notice no change in collection service during this holiday. 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.
- **Fireworks Reminder** – Fireworks are only allowed on July 4, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. This will be enforced by the Punta Gorda Police Department by calling the non-emergency number at (941) 639-4111.
- **Text My Gov** – The city has launched a new tool to connect with residents. The service is called Text My Gov and it uses a mobile phone's regular text messaging service to allow people to quickly find links, documents or text that answers their questions. No app download is needed. It allows our residents and visitors to report issues such as code violations or report issues with city infrastructure twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. A picture can also be added when reporting an issue or violation and the service sends the information immediately to city staff to have the issue resolved. To use the service simply text "hi" to (941) 347-0747. Answers to common questions are available 24/7 through website searches and preprogrammed responses. Don't have an immediate answer? The question will go to a designated mailbox to insure you get a timely response.
- **City Council meeting** – City Council met on Jan. 6. Highlighted actions include:
 - Approved FY20220 to FY2021 budget reappropriations and FY2021 appropriations
 - Approved the Comprehensive Plan pause and direction to focus on land development regulations.
 - Appropriation of priority 1 % sales tax projects this included moving up the Henry Street Sidewalk project to become a FY2021 project.
 - Moratorium on sign code enforcement continues based on advice of City Attorney
 - FY2021 progress report on Capital Improvement Projects was received by Council
 - Punta Gorda Police Department will continue research and work to enhance retail gas pump security measures

The meeting is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJGG5gpC3IU>

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./](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 will begin a new mowing cycle on Jan. 11

Code

- **Pet Waste Cleanup** – Staff would like to remind our residents and visitors to be good and responsible neighbors and canine owners and pick up after your canine from any street, sidewalk, swale, bike path, park area or any other public property or private property not owned by the canine owner/handler. The City's entire Pooper Scooper Code can be viewed at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showpublisheddocument?id=1409>, Sec. 5-2. Pooper Scooper.
- **Signs in the Residential Zoning Districts** – At the Jan. 6 City Council meeting, Council reaffirmed that there will be no enforcement of the sign regulations for signs on residential lots in the Right of Way or otherwise until such time as the sign ordinance is amended and adopted. This includes political signs/flags.

Urban Design

- **The Planning Corner – Zoning Permits**
The City of Punta Gorda's Zoning Division takes pride in helping educate and assist the community and residents with the several types of zoning applications and permits that may be required. Required Zoning permits are intended to ensure that the City is following the vision that is paved in our Land Development Regulations, City Code of Ordinances, Comprehensive Plan, and other planning documents.

Example of Zoning Applications:

- Administrative Variance
- Lot Splits
- Special Exception
- Variance
- Planned Developments
- Subdivisions



The process of these applications vary, from staff approval to a quasi-judicial public hearing process. When an application requires the quasi-judicial public hearing, additional time may be needed for review of the submitted documents and advertising to ensure accuracy. 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@cityofpuntagordafl.com. City staff looks forward to hearing from you about the future of our great community.

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** –City staff continues 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 five 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 under construction and one project completed 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 48 locations.
 - Crews manufactured 40 (10’ ft. each) seawall panels.

Engineering

- **Paving Program Street Resurfacing** - The contractor continues milling and resurfacing streets. Work is anticipated to complete by Jan. 22 (weather and equipment operations permitting). For complete list of streets [Paving Program January 2021](#). For information contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager, City of Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941) 575-5060.
- **Evening Paving Street Resurfacing** - The week of Jan. 13 through Jan. 15 evening milling and pavement resurfacing is scheduled on the following roadways: Bal Harbor Blvd. - Right turn lane (South East quadrant at Aqui Esta Drive), Maud Street (West Marion to Merrill Lynch Drive), Airport Road (US41 North Bound to west of Rail Road tracks), East Retta Esplanade (US41 South Bound to Nesbit Street). **The roads will be open to local traffic only. Detours and impact to traffic are to be anticipated. Hours of operation will be between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m.**
- **Ponce De Leon Park Seawall Repairs** – Epoxy coating of the seawall cap is complete and backfilling of the seawall along the beach is underway. The contractor has revised their projection of rip rap placement to Jan. 15. The project is on track to be completed by the end of Feb.



- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Work on the swale regrading program with JRL Underground Inc. is set to resume on Jan. 18.
- **Gilchrist Park Pier Deck Replacement** – Construction is anticipated to commence on Jan. 19 through Feb. 12 (weather permitting).
- **Palm Avenue and Chasteen Street Intersection to McGregor Street Road Closure** - The street bricks removal continues. After the bricks are removed, Utilities will remove and replace water and sewer lines. Based on bid award approvals for; the curb replacements, ADA ramps, 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 \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](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.
- **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 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. beginning Jan. 10 for routine roadway lighting repairs. 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

- **9PM Routine** – Locking car doors at night could have prevented nearly all vehicle burglaries in the City of Punta Gorda in the past year. Most criminals are only interested in easy access and will not force entry into a vehicle unless valuables are clearly visible. Follow the **9PM Routine** and check to make sure your valuables have been removed from your vehicles and your vehicle doors are locked each night before bed to help prevent crime in our city!
- **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.pgjobs.com (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.

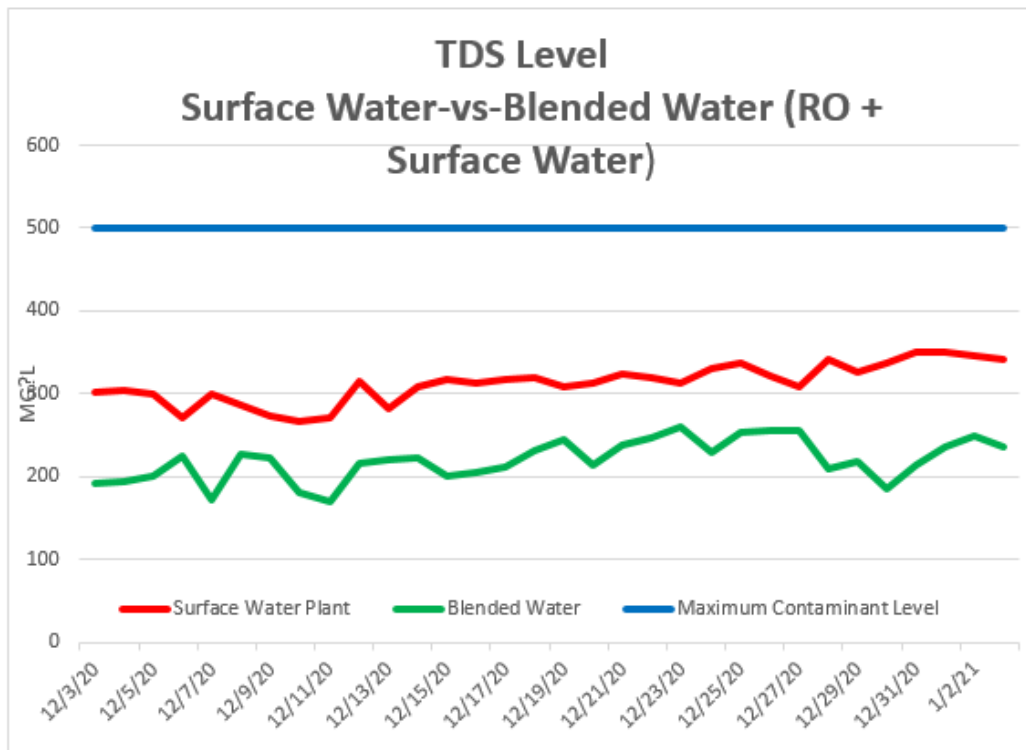


Fire Department

- Fire Prevention** – A major responsibility of the City Fire Marshal’s Office is fire prevention. One method employed to reduce the number of fires is by conducting fire and life safety inspections. Staff inspects business and multi-family structures in accordance with federal and state regulations as well as the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code. The goal is to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and amount of property loss from fire. We want to work with you to ensure that if a fire were to occur, the damage is limited as much as possible and firefighters can operate efficiently and safely. Think of it as an investment in the safety of you, the building and premises and the general public. You are encouraged to accompany the inspector during his/her visit. For more information, please contact the department at (941) 575-5529.

Utilities

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



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 49.5 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 7.1 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” Jan. 2020 .90” Jan. 2021 0.00”
- 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 96 ppm
- TDS for Jan. 7– Current 211 ppm, Low 211 ppm, High 604 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 485 ppm
- Reservoir Jan. 7 – Current 5.16’, Record Low 4.92’, Record High 5.92, 55 Year Avg. 5.16’

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.
- **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.