



Florida's Harborside Hometown

Weekly Highlights Report February 19, 2021

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – February marks the celebration of Black History month. In Punta Gorda we remember the struggles and triumphs that have shaped the community we have today. This rich history comes alive courtesy of organizations like the Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society, Blanchard House Museum and the Punta Gorda History Center.



The historic murals tell the stories of the people behind valued contributions to community development. The Baker Center School, 311 East Charlotte Avenue, hosts the mural entitled, Local Black History. You will see the image of Cornelius Ponder, who provided medical assistance to all and was a midwife. You will also find Ms. Ponder's likeness on the Ladies Remembered mural located at 314 North Tamiami Trail. John Lomas was one of the early residents who served in the Civil War. O.B. Armstrong also served in the Civil War. Mr. Armstrong went on to become a legislator and re-constructionist. Robert Meacham, a pastor, postmaster and state legislator is depicted on the mural. As is, Daniel Smith who organized the first religious services for the black community in town and was appointed to the DeSoto County Board of Education. Charles Baily, one of the seven brothers that served in WWII and was one of the Tuskegee airmen is celebrated in the art piece. Benjamin Baker, founder of the school that hosts the mural and noted educator, is shown next to an early school bus. Baker school teacher Lucille Allen also graces the mural. The Florida Stompers, a local jazz band that brought smiles to the faces of many grace the mural. George Brown, a landowner and renowned boat builder and respected equal opportunity employer as well as workers from the turpentine industry are included in tribute to the people that lived in days past.

The Life and Times of George Brown mural, located at 277 Taylor Street, is a captivating tribute to an entrepreneurial man. Mr. Brown was said to have been Florida's first equal opportunity employer. He paid all his workers based on ability without regard to race, with good and equal wages in return for hard work.

Punta Gorda also has a museum dedicated to the procurement, preservation, study and display of artifacts related to the contributions of African Americans in the settlement and development of the community. The Blanchard House Museum is currently operating virtually and can be accessed at <http://www.blanchardhousemuseum.org/>.

The final place I'll note is the Punta Gorda History Center located at 512 East Grace Street, open by appointment only and virtually at <https://puntagorda.pastperfectonline.com/>. Here you will find everything from photos, to news clippings and writings that tell the story of our African-American heritage.

We are fortunate to have talented people working hard to keep us grounded in our roots and serving as an inspiration to learn more. It has been said that the best way to predict the future is to create it. I look forward to creating a future that sustains pride in Punta Gorda's history and well-preserved historical assets.

- **City Council Meeting** – City Council will meet at the Historic City Hall on Feb. 17 at 9 a.m. A few of the items of interest include:
 - Adopted preliminary fiscal policy for the Long Range Financial Plan and budgeting purposes.
 - Approved a request for an additional staff member in the Urban Design Department.
 - Denied an event permit request for Harbor Social Live Entertainment on Mar. 20 (Business had already been granted one street closure this year)
 - Approved event permit request for the Celtic Ray St. Patrick's Day Celebration Mar. 17 and Mar. 18

View the meeting online at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6_Kqw

- **Promote Punta Gorda “Small Business Spotlight”** – The City of Punta Gorda has launched a new program entitled Promote Punta Gorda. This is a small business spotlight to focus on the businesses that are at the heart of Florida's Harborside Hometown. Small business is a critical economic driver for the city. Not only do small businesses create jobs, they also foster community pride and create a unique sense of place. It is only



with the partnership with business that the city can fulfill our 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. Promote Punta Gorda shines the light on the many business owners and their offerings in the community. Small business owners within the City limits of Punta Gorda are eligible to have their business featured on the City's social media channels and in the Weekly Highlights Report. To sign up to be in the spotlight visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/i-want-to/promote-punta-gorda-business-spotlight> or call (941) 575-3394 for more information.

Upcoming Events

- Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor St. For additional information, visit <https://www.charlotteharborecc.com/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/#>

- Feb. 27, Boys and Girls Club Farm to Table Fundraiser, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information visit, <https://www.bgcofcc.org/events>
- Feb. 28, Charlotte County Veg Fest, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information visit, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/charlotte-county-veg-fest-2021-2nd-annual-tickets-97988661725>
- Mar. 6 and 7, MY Promotions Arts & Craft Show, 10175 Tamiami Tr. (Muscle Car City). For more information visit, <http://www.mypromotions.com/>
- Mar. 6, YMCA Harbor Nights Fundraiser, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For more information visit <https://www.swflymca.org/events/2021/03/06/port-charlotte/harbor-nights-2021/>
- March 6, Bacon Jam, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information, visit <https://bscevent.com/bacon-jam-punta-gorda/>
- Mar. 14, Concert in the Park, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For additional information, contact Allmyheartllc2018@gmail.com.
- Mar. 1-15, TEAM Punt Gorda's Build a Bike-Win a Bike (Pedal and Play alternative). For additional information visit <https://teampuntagorda.org/pedal-and-play-in-paradise-2/>
- Mar. 17, St. Patrick's Day Event, Celtic Ray, 145 E Marion Ave. For additional information visit <https://celticray.net/>

Code

- **Permits required** – Staff would like to remind our residents and contractors that a Right-of-Way (ROW) permit is required prior to restoring or re-sodding any right-of-way, for all properties, developed or vacant. ROW permit applications must be submitted by a licensed contractor. The ROW permit will initiate a line and grade inspection to ensure that proper drainage is maintained as the property is restored.
- **Signs in the Right-of-way (ROW)** – At the Feb. 17 City Council meeting, Council motioned that beginning Feb. 26, Code Compliance will resume the enforcement and removal of all signs placed *in a public ROW*, in all zoning districts, regardless of content, with the exception of approved special event signage.

Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed mowing the following areas:
 - Colony Point (Colony Point Drive., W. Marion Avenue, Socorro Drive, and Coronado Drive).
 - PGI (Bal Harbor Boulevard, Deborah Drive, Ryan Boulevard, Suzi Street, and Casey Key Drive).

Urban Design

- **The Planning Corner – Land Development Regulations (LDR's): Form-Based Codes Form Based Codes Educational Video** – Urban Design Staff prepared an informational video that answers frequently asked questions about the City's Land Development Regulations. The Land Development Regulation reform project will take about a year and involves several interactive public engagement opportunities. These reforms are a result of the City Wide Charrette held in spring 2018, and will provide the basis of our Comprehensive Plan for the next 15-20 years.





The informational video can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcwKdSU8_BE. Learn more by visiting www.puntagordamasterplan.com/engage, www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/comprehensive-plan/plan-punta-gorda-comprehensive-plan-update or by email at UrbanDesign@CityofPuntaGordaFL.com.

Public Works

Administration

- **Citizens' Academy Finance and Information Technology Session** - Finance hosted their session of 2021 Citizens' Academy. The intent of this program is to provide an interactive forum whereby residents can learn first-hand how the City's local government is structured, managed, and operated. Information Technology also held their portion of Citizens' Academy which explained the management and support of technology to receive, process, store, present and protect data.
- **Citizens' Academy Police Session** - The Police Department hosted the Citizens' Academy at the Public Safety Building. Police Chief Pamela Davis provided an introduction to participants and introduced agency staff members who were present. Participants were introduced to canine Sadie and given a demonstration of her abilities. Participants were provided with informational displays of the Marine Patrol, Dive Team, Uniform Patrol, and Bicycle Unit vehicles and equipment.



Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Assessment** – City staff continues the Annual Seawall Assessment during low tide periods through Feb. 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 eight projects under construction and four projects completed in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. There is one seawall replacement projects currently under construction and three projects 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 25 locations.
 - Crews patched/repared 90’ linear feet of seawall cap and seams.
 - Crews conducted sonar reading at Cobia Bay and W. Retta Esplanade boat club.

Engineering

- **Ponce De Leon Park Seawall Repairs** – The handrail has been completed. All sod has been installed. Final inspection is pending.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Work on the swale regrading program with JRL Underground Inc. is underway in the Burnt Store Isles subdivision. Work is complete at the corner of South Crete Drive and Tripoli Boulevard and along Bordeaux Drive. Work is underway along San Sebastian Court and will then move to Santander Court.
- **Palm Avenue between Chasteen Street to McGregor Street Road Closure** – Utilities is waiting on DEP clearance to proceed with the project. The project is anticipated to be completed in April (weather permitting).



Police

- **Award Presentation** – Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody presented Captain Nahra and the members of the Veteran Crisis Assistance Team (VCAT) with the Back the Blue Award at the Public Safety Building. The Attorney General’s Back the Blue campaign highlights law enforcement officers, citizens, and organizations taking extraordinary steps to forge positive relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The VCAT is made up of sworn Punta Gorda law enforcement officer who have served, or are currently serving, in a branch of the United States Military. The VCAT assists veterans in our community who are in crisis, to help connect them with needed services, and provide follow-up to help our veterans avoid further crisis.



- **The Volunteers in Policing (VIP) program** – The police department has an active and diverse volunteer program including vehicle patrol, bike patrol, marine patrol, community services, and more. We are always looking for dedication volunteers. If you would like to volunteer contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at (941) 575-5536 or by emailing vip@pgorda.us.
- **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. To learn more visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/human-resources/employment-opportunities>.
- **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** – 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. Spots fill up quickly so we encourage potential interns to apply today! To apply for any of these positions or for more information please visit www.pgjobs.com (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for more information.

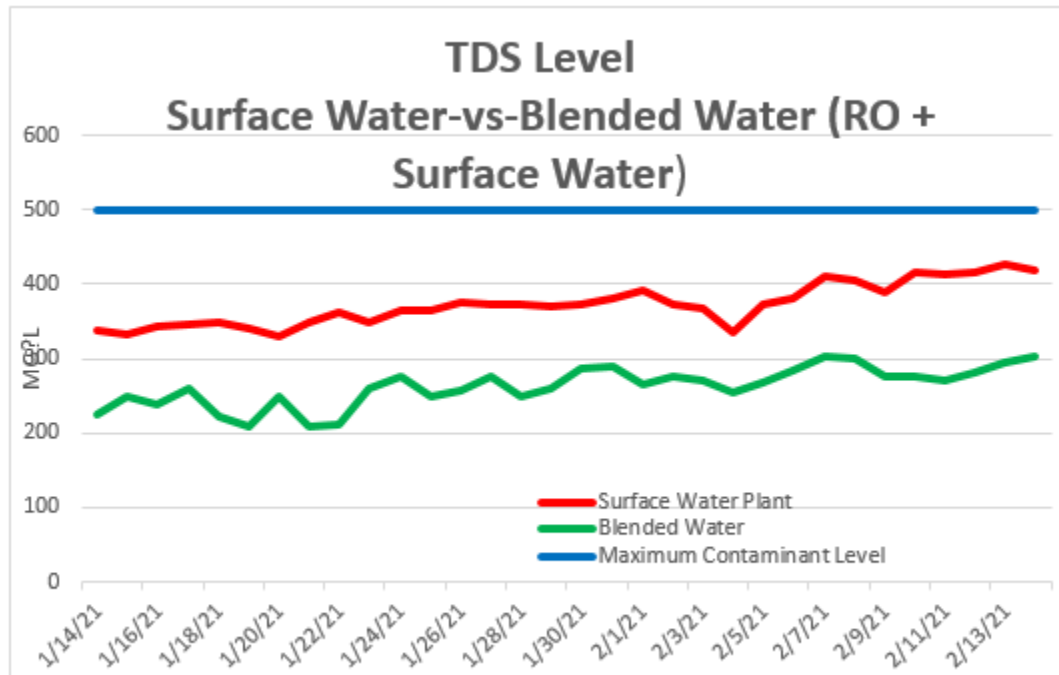
Fire Department

- **Mock State Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Inspections** – The Fire Department has been conducting mock State EMS inspections of personnel as well as all advanced life support equipment. The Fire Department receives a random inspections from the State Department of Health – Bureau of Emergency Services. State administrative rules require the Bureau to conduct inspections of EMS providers on a random basis. These inspections are conducted to ensure compliance with state law governing the operation and provision of basic and advanced life support. In the five major categories inspected for compliance, including inspection of the apparatus and equipment, the department has historically passed the inspection with excellent comments made by the inspector. In one official report, Inspector Shelly Lewis noted that personnel and service records were both excellent. Inspector Lewis stated, “The citizens and visitors of Punta Gorda can be proud of the professional and quality service you provide.”
- **Red Dot Program** – The Red Dot Program is way for you to share your medical history with emergency responders before an emergency occurs. When you dial 911, firefighters, paramedics and law enforcement arrive to begin providing emergency care. They also start asking you or your family members what seems like a tremendous amount of questions:
 - What is your medical history?
 - What medications do you take? Amount or dose? When?
 - Do you have any allergies?
 - Do you have a Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNRO) or Advanced Directives?
 - Who are your emergency contacts?

During an emergency, you may not be able to communicate or remember all of your information. Emergency responders need this important information to care for you as quickly and efficiently as possible. Charlotte County Fire and EMS, Punta Gorda Fire Department, Englewood Fire Department, Charlotte County Sheriff’s Office, and the Punta Gorda Police Department recognize this problem and created the Red Dot Medical Information Program packet to be filled out in advance of an emergency. Red Dot packets can be picked up at Public Safety Building at 1410 Tamiami Trail in Punta Gorda.

Utilities

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



Waste Water Treatment Plant

- **Fawn Rescue** – Maintenance staff saved another fawn which got separated from its mother and slid into pond number three and was unable to find its way out. The fawn was seen the next day with its mother and doing fine.



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 50.4 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 7.2 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 950 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 750 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall Feb. 2020 0.90” Feb. 2021 1.20”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 8 ppm – Total hardness 132 ppm
- TDS for Feb. 18 – Current 274 ppm, Low 274 ppm, High 656 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 486 ppm
- Reservoir Feb. 18 – Current 5.15’, Record Low 4.89’, Record High 6.36’, 55 Year Avg. 5.22’

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.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** – (Two regular) Meets the fourth Thursday at 9:00 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven member board with two alternate members. Two members must reside within the Historic District. Three year terms, maximum of three terms. Identifies for the City Council historically significant structures and sites that should be considered for designation as a “Local Historic Landmark” or be nominated for listing on the Florida Master Site File and the National Register of Historic Places. Makes recommendations of the policies for the protection of historically significant structures and sites. Makes recommendations to staff with regard to certificates of appropriateness for any demolition, variance, sign or relocation of structures. Promotes public awareness of historic preservation.

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:
 - Gulfshore Medical Services, Inc., 122 Nesbit Street, #112