

## Weekly Highlights Report March 5, 2021

### City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – This past June, Heartland Forward named the Punta Gorda metropolitan area that encompasses all of Charlotte County, the seventh best entrepreneurial ecosystem in the nation. This designation confirmed what many entrepreneurs have come to appreciate about doing business here. Business owners are well networked, have access to finance capital, and are able to attract the talent needed to operate successfully. It also doesn't hurt that the area is a natural paradise and has no income, inheritance, or estate taxes. These are key factors that draw business owners from established economic hubs.

As of this week, the city has 1029 active business licenses within the city limits of Punta Gorda. To assist with marketing the business community 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. Promote Punta Gorda will feature the many business owners and their offerings. It also will highlight the many benefits to buying local. 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.

Another offering unique to the City of Punta Gorda is the opportunity for prospective business owners to participate in a Design Studio. This pre-application meeting, led by Urban Design staff, assists the applicant in deciding if their new proposed development meets guidelines in accordance with the Land Development Regulations prior to submitting any development application. Design Studio meetings in Mar. will take place on Mar. 11 and Mar. 25 from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m.

The City continues to invest in infrastructure improvements that benefit both residents and businesses, such as the reverse osmosis water plant and future wastewater treatment plant expansion. The quality of our amenities also makes Punta Gorda unique and attractive to business owners. Our businesses benefit from continual investment in improvements such as at Ponce Park, upgraded splash pad amenities slated for Laishley Park, and the maintenance of the Herald Court Centre parking garage providing free parking for business customers.

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 its 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. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at [citymgr@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:citymgr@cityofpuntafordafl.com) or by calling (941) 575-3302.*



- **Promote Punta Gorda “Small Business Spotlight” Fishermen’s Village** – Located at 1200 W. Retta Esplanade Fishermen’s is a mall, resort and marina located on beautiful Charlotte Harbor. 30+ shops and boutiques, five restaurants, vacation suites (second level), water recreation, full service marina, live entertainment, year round special events and exquisite sunsets!



**What makes Fishermen’s Village Special?** The eclectic mix of independently owned shops/boutiques and galleries and our majestic setting on Charlotte Harbor! So much to see and do in one location.

**How does Fishermen’s Village help the community?** Fishermen’s Village supports numerous non-profits through monetary donations as well as special event partnerships throughout the year. We are an economic engine for Punta Gorda, home to your friends and neighbors who own and operate a plethora of retail and dining options. Our open air location offers a relaxing getaway, making memories, meeting between cities in Florida and a truly unique experience!

**What facts are important for customers to know about Fishermen’s Village?** Fishermen’s Village is open seven days a week, offer free parking and complimentary golf cart rides anywhere you may need to go on the property! Fishermen’s Village has Suites located on the second level for daily rental or a longer stay if you prefer!

**Fun facts about Fishermen’s Village?** Fishermen’s Villages has "fish lighting" which can be viewed at night from center court, free bicycles available at the Marina and terrific dolphin sightings aboard King Fisher Fleet sunset cruises and out island excursions!

To sign up to be in the Promote Punta Gorda “Small Business 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/#>
- Mar. 6, YMCA Harbor Nights, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For more information visit [Harbor Nights 2021 - The SKY Family YMCA \(swflymca.org\)](http://www.swflymca.org)
- Mar. 6, Hop’n into Spring plant & craft sale, First United Methodist Church, 507 W. Marion Ave. For more information, contact [carol25582002@gmail.com](mailto:carol25582002@gmail.com)
- Mar. 6-7, 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/>

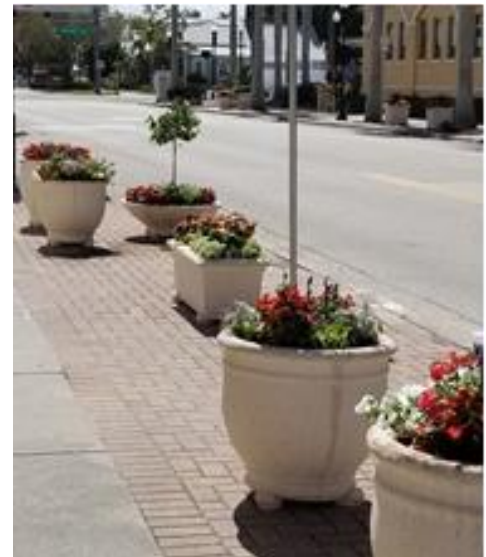
- Mar. 6, CANCELED Bacon Jam, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information, visit <https://bscevent.com/bacon-jam-punta-gorda/>
- Mar. 6, LoCash VIP Concert, City Marketplace, 115 Tamiami Tr., ticket purchase in advance (not sold at gate). For more information visit <https://smugglers.com>
- Mar. 11-14, Punta Gorda Boat Show, City Marketplace, 115 Tamiami Tr. For more information visit <https://smugglers.com>
- Mar. 14, Concert in the Park, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For additional information, contact [Allmyheartllc2018@gmail.com](mailto:Allmyheartllc2018@gmail.com)
- Mar. 17, St. Patrick's Day Event, Celtic Ray, 145 E Marion Ave. For additional information visit <https://celticray.net/>
- 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. 19-20, Premier Auto Auction, Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, 75 Taylor St. For more information contact [jim.finch@charlottecountyfl.gov](mailto:jim.finch@charlottecountyfl.gov)
- Mar. 20-21, Peace River National Art Show. For additional information, visit <https://www.visualartscenter.org/>
- Mar. 27, National Welcome Home Vietnam Veteran's Day from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Laishley Park Gazebo, 96 Nesbit St., for more information contact [awbill2003@gmail.com](mailto:awbill2003@gmail.com)
- Mar. 27-28, End of Season Arts & Craft Show, City Marketplace, 115 Tamiami Tr. For more information contact [mypromo@mypromotions.com](mailto:mypromo@mypromotions.com)
- April 10-11, Bloom and Art, Art & Craft Show, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For more information contact [blueribboneventsllc@gmail.com](mailto:blueribboneventsllc@gmail.com)

### Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed mowing and trimming the following areas:
  - Downtown and Historic District (West Marion Avenue, West Olympia Avenue, Shreve Street, and Harvey Street)
  - East Side and the area behind Dunkin Donuts (East Marion Avenue, East Olympia Avenue, Narranja Street, East Henry Street, and Cooper Street)
  - Burnt Store Isles (Monaco Drive, Tripoli Boulevard, Madrid Boulevard, and Macedonia Drive)
  - Burnt Store Meadows (Areas of Tamiami Trail, North Blue Sage, South Blue Sage, Royal Poinciana, and Gold Tree)

### Urban Design

- **Punta Gorda in Bloom** – The Punta Gorda in Bloom project continues on Taylor Street. Volunteers met on Monday to plant the latest addition to the Taylor Street plantscape. With the exception of the meter and some irrigation needs, the project is being funded by Alan Schulman, Watchdog Sump Pumps. Together with TEAM Punta Gorda and chaired by Richard Polk, the group has installed pole planters at Hector House Plaza, pole planters and planter boxes at the County Courthouse, and planted pots in groups along the sidewalk. A group of 40 plus volunteers will maintain these plantings throughout the year.



- **The Planning Corner – March is Florida Bicycle Month!** Florida Bicycle Month is a time to encourage bicycling and recognize its important role in providing transportation and recreation to millions of Florida’s residents and visitors annually. Governor DeSantis signed an official [proclamation](#) recognizing March as Florida Bicycle Month. Take part in the CSW Florida Bike Challenge! It is a fun and free competition between the community and workplaces to see who can earn the most points for riding and encouraging other during Florida Bike Month in March. It is a great way to encourage people to enjoy riding they bike safely for health, happiness, and fun. For more information on the CSW Florida Bike Challenge, please visit <http://lovetoride.net/csw>. Thinking of going on a bike ride by yourself, with friends, or family? Watch the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Video Update #17 to learn more about the Punta Gorda Pathways! View the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4UkmvijCzw&feature=share>.



If you plan on biking around the City of Punta Gorda (or anywhere in Florida), please be sure to follow the Bicycle Etiquette and Florida Law:

Obey traffic signals and signs

Ride with the flow of traffic

- Riding against the flow of traffic is illegal and dangerous

Use of lights is required from dusk until dawn

- Law requires a white front light and red rear light
- Battery powered Christmas or other colored lights on bicycle frame or wheels can enhance visibility and fun too

Yield the right-of-way when entering a roadway

Yield to pedestrians in crosswalk

Remember that:

- People riding bicycles are allowed on all roadways in Florida except where specifically prohibited
  - People riding bicycles have the right to occupy the travel lane if the travel lane is not wide enough for the safe passage of both a vehicle and a bicycle
  - A vehicle passing a bicycle must give a minimum of 3 feet of clearance to the person on the bicycle
- Bicycles are permitted on sidewalks
  - Be sure to yield to pedestrians and other slower users
  - Be sure to signal by ringing a bell or calling out “Passing on your [right or left]” when passing
- Helmets are required for any rider under 16 years old

For more information, please visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/visitors/bicycling>

## 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)** – Code Compliance has 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.

## Public Works

### Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has six projects under construction and seven projects completed in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. All seawall replacement projects in Burnt Store Isles have been completed. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
  - Crews filled depressions at 26 locations.
  - Crews patched/repared 326' linear feet of seawall.
  - Crews removed one piling from the canal.

### Engineering

- **Adrienne Street Pier** – Awaiting the delivery of materials. The pier is currently closed to the Public and will remain so until the work is complete.
- **City of Punta Gorda Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Audit** – As part of the City's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit the year two Annual Report has been completed and deemed satisfactory by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Work was completed along Segovia Drive. Work is underway along Santander Drive and Portofino Drive.
- **Palm Avenue between Chasteen Street to McGregor Street Road Closure** – Construction continues on Palm Avenue from the Chasteen St. intersection to McGregor Boulevard. The project has been phased starting with the road closure between the project limits, historic street brick removal and staging. The bricks removal and staging are complete. The Utilities Department has removed and replaced underground water/service and sewer lines receiving Department of Environmental Protection quality drinking water approval on Feb. 26. The next steps of the project are excavation, road bed stabilization, curb and ADA ramp replacements, asphalt base, final sand- in and bricking replacement. Travelers are advised to use extreme caution and be alert while workers are present in the right-of-way. Please allow additional time for travel for detours and while work is performed. Temporary delays are to be anticipated.

## Police

- **Help Reduce Crime** – Punta Gorda has seen multiple vehicle burglaries and several stolen vehicles already in 2021. All of these crimes involved vehicles that were left unlocked at night and those that were stolen had keys that had been left in the vehicles. These crimes are being committed by criminal groups from outside our area. These groups are not interested in breaking into vehicles and are only targeting vehicles that are unlocked and have keys left in them. Please help us reduce crime in our community by removing valuables and locking your vehicle every night!
- **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 & 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](http://www.pgjobs.com) (941) 575-5571 or [employeedevelopment@pgorda.us](mailto:employeedevelopment@pgorda.us) for more information.
- **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. Members of the community interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at (941) 575-5536 or by emailing [vip@pgorda.us](mailto:vip@pgorda.us). To apply for employment, please visit [www.pgpdjobs.com](http://www.pgpdjobs.com) or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at [employeedevelopment@pgorda.us](mailto:employeedevelopment@pgorda.us).

## Fire Department

- **High Rise Training** – The Fire Department hosted High Rise fire operations training this week. The training's main focus was new equipment familiarization as well as new procedures utilizing updated standard operating guidelines to better prepare firefighters for the potential of high rise emergencies. Field Training Officer Steve Richardson was the lead instructor on this training and all crews performed great with the new equipment.

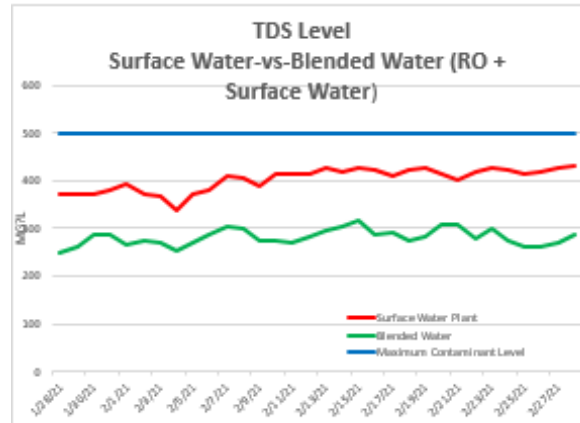


## Finance

- **Changes to Utility Bills** – UTILITY BILLS ARE CHANGING! Beginning this month, utility bills will be printed on letter size paper, come in an envelope and include a return envelope. No more postcards. This new format gives us the opportunity to provide you with more relative information than ever before. For customers who receive bills by email, please note the email will now come from [puntagorda@onlinebiller.com](mailto:puntagorda@onlinebiller.com) which you may need to add to your safe senders list. Anyone who does not receive their Mar. bill at the usual time during the month should contact [pgcollections@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:pgcollections@cityofpuntafordafl.com) or (941) 639-2528.

## Utilities

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



## **Water Treatment Plant Operations**

- 56.5 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 8.1 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” March 2020 0.00” March 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 8 ppm – Total hardness 140 ppm
- TDS for Mar. 4 – Current 277 ppm, Low 277 ppm, High 659 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 491 ppm
- Reservoir Mar. 4 – Current 5.09’, Record Low 4.93’, Record High 5.91’, 55 Year Avg. 5.21’

## 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.
- **Donation Review Committee** – (representative of non-profit organization related to history of City) Meets quarterly, as needed, immediately following meetings of the Historic Preservation Advisory Board. Five member board. Three of the total five members will be appointed from the Historic Preservation Advisory Board membership. Reviews nonmonetary donations received by the City and recommends acceptance or rejection of same.
- **Firefighters’ Pension Board** – Meets quarterly and as called in Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents, two firefighters and one at-large as appointed by the Board. Two year terms – no maximum. Financial disclosure required. Charged with management of the Firefighters’ Pension Fund.
- **General Employees’ Pension Board** – Meets quarterly and as called in Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents, two general employees and one at-large as appointed by the Board. Four year terms – no maximum. Financial disclosure required. Charged with management of the General Employees’ Pension Fund.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** – (One regular and two alternates) 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.
- **Burnt Store Isles Canal Advisory Committee** – Meets the second Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be resident of Burnt Store Isles. Five 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 of Ordinances.

#### **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:
  - Intercounty Property Management, Inc., 3837 Bermuda Court
  - Oliver Law PLLC, 407 E Marion Avenue, #103
  - Rest Cottage Lane Vacation Rental, 711 West Marion Avenue
  - Sazon Jibarito LLC, 1002 Tamiami Trail