

Weekly Highlights Report March 12, 2021

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – Mar. 1 through Mar. 7 was National Write a Letter of Appreciation Week. It provides the perfect opportunity to draw attention to and express gratitude for a sampling of the people and entities that make Punta Gorda a vibrant waterfront community, unique in character and history; as a desirable place to live work and visit.

Thank you to the many residents that take the time to bring along a garbage bag on their morning walks to pick up items of trash. Great thanks also goes out to boaters who do the same on our waterways and canals. We see you and appreciate your care for this community. This contribution benefits residents and visitors to the community alike. Join me in saying thank you the next time you see someone on the Harborwalk, in the Historic District or on the water helping to keep our City clean.

The PGI Green Thumbs deserve a sincere thank you for their establishment and maintenance of gardens that beautify the city. Nature Park is a showplace because of the hard work of each of the individuals involved in this non-profit.

The joy and smiles that are seen every day at Gilchrist Park Playground are the result of the hard work of the Friends of Gilchrist Park. The recent addition of a Little Free Library for the children's books is another enhancement to the community as a result of the efforts of this group. TEAM Punta Gorda's impact is felt throughout Punta Gorda. The list of accomplishments for TEAM is long. To just highlight a few, the Loaner Bike Program, Community Gardens, America in Bloom, maritime programs that focus on stewardship and promotion of Charlotte Harbor, convening residents to assist in city projects and providing events that unite the community and help those in need. Thank you TEAM for being a difference maker in Punta Gorda. TEAM is always accepting new residents looking to work together to enhance our community. Learn more at <https://teampuntagorda.org/>.

The Volunteers in Policing group deserves an enormous thank you for the service provided to our city. Services include vehicle patrol, bike patrol, marine patrol, community services, and more that enhance safety. The Punta Gorda Fire Department volunteers also are owed a debt of gratitude for the support they provide to the community. This group of 25 adds value to our department and serves our residents through their efforts.

Our Boards and Commissions are numerous and take hours of residents time to help serve our City and make it a better place, and entities like the Historic Mural Society, History Center and Historical Society work tirelessly to preserve the culture of our city. This list is by no means all inclusive. There are of course many more people and organizations doing great things that benefit the community every day. It is through all of these contributions, small and large, that come together and create the state's most picturesque, enjoyable and accessible waterfront destination for all to enjoy.



- **Hampton Manor Ground Breaking** – Mayor Matthews, Vice-Mayor Carey and Councilmember Prafke participated in the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce Hampton Manor assisted living ground breaking ceremony. Hampton Manor is being constructed 10211 Tamiami Trail in Punta Gorda.



- **City Council** – The Punta Gorda City Council will meet on Mar. 17 at 9 a.m. at the Historic City Hall. A few of the items of interest include:
 - Learn to Sail floating dock expansion request
 - New Christmas tree proposal from the Tree Lighting Committee
 - An Emancipation Day resolution
 - Gilchrist Park revised cost estimates

The full agenda will be available online at <http://novuspublic.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/> or watch live on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6_Kqw.

- **Promote Punta Gorda “Small Business Spotlight”**
The Shipping Post is located at 3941 Tamiami Trail #3157. Phone number is (941) 639-8883. Web address is www.ShippingPostOnline.com.



What is The Shipping Post? The Shipping Post is an independent packing, mailing and shipping hub that has been servicing Punta Gorda for over 30 years with an award winning selection of greeting cards and gifts. The Shipping Post has frequently been recognized as being one of the Top 100 UPS Authorized Shipping Outlets in America. The Shipping Post has often been recognized as one of Charlotte County's best, by the readers of the Charlotte Sun, in three different categories: best greeting card store, best gift shop and best packing, shipping and mailing center. The Shipping Post offers services and products, domestic and international, from the United States Post Office (USPS), United Parcel Service (UPS), Federal Express (FedEx) and Dalsey, Hillblom and Lynn (DHL). They also crate and ship freight domestically and internationally. The Shipping Post offers business services and products including Public Notary service, private mailbox rentals, color copying, emailing, scanning, faxing, laminating and shredding.

How does The Shipping Post help the community? We have helped raise money for the Peace River Wildlife Center, The Animal Welfare League and for the local chapter of Disabled American Vets (DAV). We often donate money or gifts to other charities and events on a request basis. We just created a FunD (no typo) Raising Committee with employees of The Shipping Post. The mission of the committee is to identify local, underserved charitable causes that we can help and gets everyone at The Shipping Post involved in making a difference.

What facts are important for customers to know about The Shipping Post? Current Best of Charlotte in three categories: Greeting Card Store, Gift Shop, and Packing, Mailing and Shipping Center. A+ Rating BBB, Perennial Top 100 UPS ASO. One stop shop for FedEx, UPS, USPS, DHL shipping, mailing and dropping off. We guarantee our professional packing services. Proud members of: Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, Retail Shipping Associates, Association of Mail and Business Centers, the PCC (Postal Customer Council), and of The Package Hub Business. Centers franchise. We have 11 Certified and Bonded Notary Publics on staff.

Fun facts about The Shipping Post? Once recognized as "The Hitching Post" because people have gotten married by our Notary Publics in our store (three couples and counting).

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/#>
- Visual Arts Center events can be accessed at <https://visualartcenter.org/pages/calendar-of-events>
- Mar. 11-14, Punta Gorda Boat Show, City Marketplace, 115 Tamiami Tr. For more information visit <https://smugglers.com>
- Mar. 13-14, Sullivan Street Craft Fair, Sullivan St. from W Retta Esplanade to W Virginia, contact jrwright@puntagorda-chamber.com
- Mar. 14, Concert in the Park, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For additional information, contact 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. 18, PG Social House Moonlight Market, 124 Cross St., contact PGsocialhouse@gmail.com
- Mar. 19-20, Premier Auto Auction, Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, 75 Taylor St. For more information contact 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
- Mar. 27-28, End of Season Arts & Craft Show, City Marketplace, 115 Tamiami Tr. For more information contact mypromo@mypromotions.com
- April 4, 1st United Methodist Church Easter Sunrise Service and Life Petting Zoo, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade, contact kathy@whatis1st.com
- April 10-11, Bloom and Art, Art & Craft Show, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For more information contact blueribboneventsllc@gmail.com
- April 30, Hibiscus Festival, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade, contact teresadesguin@iheartmedia.com

Lot Mowing Program – The City begins a new lot mowing and edging cycle on Mar. 15.

Urban Design

- **America in Bloom** – Public Works Right of Way Division continues to assist on completing the irrigation project on Taylor Street. Once completed, the pots placed by the Punta Gorda in Bloom group will be irrigated.

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.
- **The Planning Corner – Land Development Regulations (LDR's): Save the Date!** The Code Framework Workshops will be held on Mar. 23 and 30.) and have been designed to involve the community of Punta Gorda in establishing the building blocks of the new Form-Based Code (FBC). To RSVP for these upcoming events, please visit the project website <https://www.puntagordamasterplan.com/new-events>. For more information, please contact UrbanDesign@CityofPuntaGordaFL.com.



Code Framework Workshop: Part I Mar. 23 from 6 – 7:30 p.m.

The Code Framework Workshops have been designed to involve the community of Punta Gorda in establishing the building blocks of the new form-based code. In the first part of this two-meeting workshop, Dover, Kohl and Partners (DKP) will give a brief overview of what land development regulations and form-based codes are and then go into more detail regarding the challenges and issues with Punta Gorda's existing zoning regulations. A question and answer session will follow. After questions have been answered, the planning team will present some initial elements for the future Form Based Codes framework for the community to consider. Participants will be asked what building types they prefer and where they think those are appropriate as well where the most and least intense building forms should be permitted.

Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XOKKJbA3QYKwcv_jXOOZnQ

Code Framework Workshop: Part II Mar. 30 from 6 – 7:30 p.m.

The Code Framework Workshops have been designed to involve the community of Punta Gorda in establishing the building blocks of the new form-based code (FBC). In the second part of this two-meeting workshop, DKP, will summarize the community input from Part I, as well as input received during the technical meetings. The team will then present an updated Regulating Plan, which is a fine-grained version of a zoning map that divides the FBC area into distinct zones that correspond to unique building form standards. Participants will be asked if they agree or not with the zones defined in the plan and will have a chance to recommend revisions. To get into more detail about the character of development that is appropriate for each zone, participants will also be asked about specific architectural styles, building form standards, and frontage types.

Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dmYKLO0bSoKL3cETXbndyw

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Mangroves** – Mangroves in the Charlotte Harbor area, live in loose wet soils associated with shorelines tidally influenced bays and inland waterways and are key to a thriving harbor. Important facts, including benefits of mangroves and trimming and alteration regulations can be found at [Mangroves | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us/mangroves). Living with mangroves is outlined in the detailed brochure [ShowDocument \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us/showdocument).
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has nine 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 25 locations and removed one piling from the canal.
 - Crews patched/repaired 61' linear feet of seawall cap/seam.

Administration

- **Citizens' Academy Utilities Session** – Utilities Director, Chuck Pavlos hosted utilities session of 2021 Citizens' Academy. Participants were given a presentation of the Utility Departments actions and discussed the role of the department divisions and utility organization chart. Wastewater Plant Supervisor, David Brooks then gave a presentation and virtual tour of the wastewater plant which explained the entire wastewater process. Lab Technician, Tom Spencer then gave the participants a tour of the Water Treatment Plant Facility, which treats and supplies potable water to Punta Gorda Utilities customers. The last stop on the tour was Hendrickson Dam, which was constructed in 1964.



Engineering

- **Adrienne Street Pier** – Still awaiting the delivery of materials. The pier is currently closed to the Public and will remain so until the work is complete.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Work is almost complete on Santander Drive and grading is underway along Portofino Drive. Final sodding on these two streets should be complete next week.
- **King Street Survey and Plan** – The survey is anticipated to start next week.
- **Madrid Boulevard Warranty Work** – Beginning the week of Mar. 29 through Apr. 2 (weather permitting), warranty work is scheduled to correct settlement dips on Madrid Blvd. near the Publix Plaza entrance. Single lane closures are to be anticipated while work is performed. Travelers are requested to use extreme caution while workers are present in the right of way and allow additional time for travel. Temporary delays are to be anticipated. For information [Engineering | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us/engineering) or please contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager, City of Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941)575-5060 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

- **Palm Avenue Between Chasteen Street to McGregor Street Road Closure** – Contractor commencement is pending. The following contracted scope of work is: some curb replacements, ADA ramps, crushed concrete road base, asphalt, sand and re-placement of historic street bricks. This work is anticipated to be completed in May (weather permitting). 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. For information on this project [Engineering | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](http://www.punta-gorda.fl.us).
- **Serenity Garden Sidewalk at Nature Park** – Work is scheduled to begin next week on the installation of the sidewalk at Serenity Garden at the Nature Park on Aquí Esta Dr. The project is anticipated to be completed the week of Mar. 23.

Police

- **Living with Coyotes:** Coyotes are native to Florida and have become more common in our area over the last several years. Coyote sightings are fairly typical for Punta Gorda residents. Here are some tips from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the University of Florida on living with coyotes:
 - Never attempt to touch or feed a coyote;
 - They can attack pets, so keep a watchful eye on your dog or cat if it is outdoor and keep them on a leash;
 - Coyotes will rarely confront a human, but if they do yell or throw rocks to scare it away. A small portable air horn or whistle works great for scaring coyotes.
 - Don't leave pet food or garbage outdoors;
 - Never move towards a coyote or corner it so it can't escape;
 - If you come across a coyote and feel it is a threat, please call the Punta Gorda Police Department at 941-639-4111.



For more information visit <http://myfwc.com/conservation/you- conserve/wildlife/coyotes>.

- **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 (941) 575-5571 or 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. To apply for employment, please visit www.pgpdjobs.com or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.

Fire Department

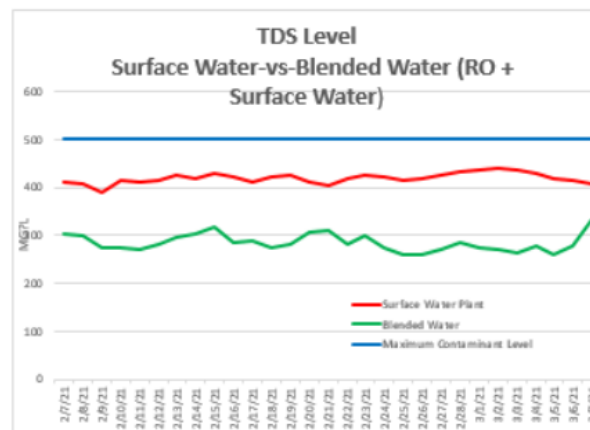
- **Daylight Saving Time** – Daylight Savings Time begins Mar. 14th at 2 a.m. As you change your clocks forward, Punta Gorda Fire Department would like to remind residents to change the battery in their smoke alarms, CO alarms and NOAA All Weather Radios. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 96% of all U.S. households have at least one smoke alarm and 75% of all U.S. households have at least one working smoke alarm. However, each year, in the U.S., more than 3,000 people die in home fires; most are homes without a working smoke alarm. Roughly 3 out of 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or the alarms are not working. These deadly fires often occur late at night and early morning when individuals are sleeping. When smoke alarms fail to operate, it is usually the result of missing, disconnected or dead batteries. Smoke alarms provide occupants with an early warning allowing them additional time to escape. When properly installed and maintained, smoke alarms save lives and protect against injury and loss due to fire. You double your chances of surviving a home fire with working smoke alarms compared to homes without working smoke alarms. To keep you and your family safe follow these life-saving smoke alarm tips:



- ✓ Place a smoke alarm on every level of your home and inside and outside sleeping areas.
- ✓ Check smoke alarms monthly by pushing the test button. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle.
- ✓ Change the batteries in your alarms at least once a year or each time you change your clock. (Spring forward, fall back).
- ✓ The life span of a smoke alarm is 8-10 years and the entire alarm should be replaced during this time (consider installing a ten-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened).
- ✓ Hard-wired smoke alarms with battery back-ups need to be tested monthly and batteries replaced yearly.
- ✓ Keep smoke alarms clean. Vacuum or dust your smoke alarms according to manufacturer's directions to keep them working properly.

Utilities

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



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 51.7 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 7.4 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 March 2020 0.00” March 2021 0.03”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 7 ppm – Total hardness 126 ppm
- TDS for Mar. 11 – Current 267 ppm, Low 267 ppm, High 669 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 493 ppm
- Reservoir Mar. 11 – Current 5.06’, Record Low 4.09’, Record High 5.88’, 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:
 - ✓ Exquisite Auto Sports, LLC – 121 E. McKenzie St.
 - ✓ Shaded Lip and Beauty Bar – 318 Tamiami Trail #221
 - ✓ Vacation Rental – 3759 Tripoli Blvd.
 - ✓ Vacation Rental – 2507 Ryan Blvd.

Transferred Business’

- ✓ PGI Convenience is now PGI Mart 1133 Bal Harbor Blvd #1153