

Weekly Highlights Report March 19, 2021

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – As we begin to cautiously emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Punta Gorda is welcoming residents and visitors to participate in a variety of events that add to the charm of Punta Gorda. From arts and culture to preserving our historic, charming walkable downtown, March offers opportunities to be a part of the relaxed community that is Punta Gorda.

It is a big month for the Visual Arts Center (VAC) in Punta Gorda. Not only do they serve the community with three major galleries, six classrooms, jewelry, glass, pottery and technology studios, an extensive arts library, gift gallery and art and supply store. They also provide the best art classes, instructors, and exhibit opportunities for the community in their 12,000 square foot facility located at 210 Maud Street.



The VAC also puts on one of the best art festivals in Florida. The Peace River National Art Festival is held March 20 and 21 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Laishley Park, at 120 Laishley Court on the waterfront of Punta Gorda. The Peace River National Art Festival is Charlotte County's premiere outdoor juried fine arts show. The two day event draws over 8,000 visitors. Nearly 100 nationally recognized juried artists represent various mediums including art glass, fiber arts, jewelry, leather goods, metalwork, oil paintings, photography, pottery, stone sculptures and watercolor. Live music, art demonstrations and an array of food and beverages complement the art show for an immersive cultural experience. Masks and full precautions are required and admission is \$5.00 per person to support the VAC.

Next week the city will host Code Framework Workshops. The first workshop will take place on March 23 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Military Heritage Museum and via Zoom. Dover, Kohl and Partners (DKP) will define land development regulations and form-based codes (FBC) to help the public understand these processes. Discussion will also be held regarding the challenges with Punta Gorda's existing zoning regulations. The planning team will present some initial elements for the future FBC framework for the community to consider. Participants will be asked what building types are preferred and where they are appropriate as well where the most and least intense building forms should be permitted.

The second workshop will take place on March 30 from 6 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. at the Military Heritage Museum or available via Zoom. In the second part of this two-meeting workshop, DKP will recap the community input from part one and the technical meetings. The team will present an updated regulating plan that divides the FBC area into distinct zones that correspond to unique building form standards. Participants will have a chance to recommend revisions to the defined zones and be asked about specific architectural styles, building form standards, and frontage types that are appropriate for each zone. Register for the sessions at <https://www.puntagordamasterplan.com>.

- **Vehicle Burglaries and Thefts** – Over the past several years we have had multiple incidents of vehicles burglaries and vehicle thefts in Punta Gorda. Most of these are linked to well organized theft groups out of the St. Petersburg/Bradenton area. These groups arrive in small number in the middle of the night and quickly make their way through neighborhoods looking for unlocked vehicles and vehicles with keys left inside. In nearly every one of these instances, the vehicles that were buglarized were unlocked with valuables left inside and the vehicles that were stolen had the keys left inside. While we are certainly happy that our residents feel safe and secure in our community, those feelings of security that lead residents to leave their vehicles unlocked and what is causing our community to be targeted. Please remember to remove valuables and keys from your vehicle and lock your vehicles doors each night!

- **Promote Punta Gorda “Small Business Spotlight”** GMAN Home Watch of Punta Gorda is located at 1133 Bal Harbor Boulevard, Suite 1139, PMB 255 Punta Gorda. The phone number is (941) 621-5254 <https://gmanhomewatch.com/>.



What is GMAN Home Watch? GMAN Home Watch of Punta is insured, bonded, trained and accredited to conduct visual inspections of vacant homes to ensure that

operating systems are functioning and not causing damage to the home. Situations we frequently encounter include clogged air conditioning drain lines, roof leaks and damaged water heaters all of which can introduce gallons of unwanted water into the home. If left unchecked, these conditions can lead to mold and mildew damage costing the homeowner thousands of dollars in remediation and repairs. In addition to taking care of your home, we offer additional services, such as meeting contractors, receiving deliveries, and starting and idling cars. Following each visit, we provide timely reports that include a checklist of findings with photographs and comments.

What facts are important for customers to know about GMAN? The owners of GMAN Home Watch are two retired FBI Special Agents with over 60 years of distinguished and dedicated service in law enforcement investigations and property protection. Although GMAN Home Watch is new to Punta Gorda, it has a proven track record in the home watch business. In 2017 GMAN Home Watch was established in Venice, Florida where, based on its outstanding reputation for honesty, reliability and professionalism, the business grew to nearly 200 clients. In 2020, the business was sold to a new owner and GMAN Home Watch of Punta Gorda was formed. In addition to the knowledge and experience we bring to each home watch visit, GMAN affiliates with the National Home Watch Association to gain the benefit of best practices in the industry. Additionally, because many insurance companies charge higher premiums to homeowners who leave their property unoccupied for 30 days or more, we conduct visual inspections of vacant properties at least twice a month. In Florida, many carriers completely deny claims if they believe damage was caused by a water leak that took place more than 14 days earlier. This particular situation has become a nightmare for many homeowners and have prompted absentee homeowners opt for weekly inspections by GMAN Home Watch.

Fun facts about GMAN Home Watch? In 2018 the number of seasonal homes was estimate to be approximately 7.4 million with largest concentration in Florida, where 1.1 million are known to be located. These figures are based solely on homes with recorded mortgages making the actual number is undoubtedly higher.

How does GMAN Home Watch help the community? By conducting visual checks of important mechanical systems, such as HVAC, electrical, plumbing and irrigation, etc., GMAN Home Watch helps protect Punta Gorda properties from damage and deterioration that can occur in unattended homes due to factors such as wind, water leaks, power outages, pests, and mold, just to name a few. GMAN Home Watch keeps homes safe from deterioration and harmful conditions while homeowners are away. We serve both seasonal residents and vacationers by acting as their eyes and ears and keeping them informed of changing conditions with timely electronic reports and photographs. Unlike home watch “hobbyists”, who may also provide handyman services, GMAN does not profit by finding problems that generate business “on the side”. Instead, as members of the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce we proudly refer our clients to local licensed businesses if they are in need of maintenance, repairs, or other services. By watching each property as if it were our own, GMAN helps keep Punta Gorda a great place to call home.

- **Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society** – Mayor Matthews, Vice-Mayor Carey and Councilmember Prafke participated in the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce Historic Punta Gorda Army Field Mural Dedication on Mar. 18.



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/#>
- Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, 2001 Shreve St., PGICA's Education Program classes can be accessed at https://pgica.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=799073&module_id=364888
- Visual Arts Center events can be accessed at <https://visualartcenter.org/pages/calendar-of-events>
- 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
- Apr. 4, 1st United Methodist Church Easter Sunrise Service and Life Petting Zoo, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade, contact kathy@whatis1st.com
- Apr. 10-11, Bloom and Art, Art & Craft Show, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For more information contact blueribboneventsllc@gmail.com
- Apr. 30, Hibiscus Festival, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade, contact teresadesguin@iheartmedia.com
- May 1, Mental Health Awareness Walk, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information contact kpomerville@cbhcfl.org
- May 9, YMCA Healthy Kids Day 5K Run, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information contact lnason@skyyymca.org
- May 22, Girls on the Run 5K Run, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information contact kim.amontree@girlsontherun.org

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.

Lot Mowing Program – The City has completed mowing in the following areas:

- Colony Point (Colony Point Drive, West Marion Avenue, Socorro and Coronado Drives).
- PGI (Bal Harbor and Ryan Boulevards, Deborah and Casey Key Drives and Suzi Street).

Urban Design

- **The Planning Corner – Land Development Regulations (LDR's):
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 are appropriate as well where the most and least intense building forms should be permitted.

Virtual Registration:

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

In-Person Registration:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/code-framework-workshop-part-i-in-person-event-tickets-146474078913>



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.

Virtual Registration:

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

In-Person Registration:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/code-framework-workshop-part-ii-in-person-event-tickets-146474486131>

- **More about Bike Safety! – It's Florida Bike Month** – With mild winters and plenty of flat terrain, Punta Gorda is a wonderful year round place to ride a bicycle. Before you go for a bike ride, there are a few things you need to know regarding YOUR safety and the safety of others. Watch the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Video Update #21 to learn more about loaning a bike and bike safety!



**Parks and
Recreation 2020
Master Plan:
Update #21**



Watch the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7sihinEg3c>.

For more information on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update, please visit <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/i-want-to-view/park-recreation-master-plan>.

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has eight projects under construction and nine 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 12 locations.
 - Crews patched/repared 143' linear feet of seawall cap/seams.
 - Crews removed one piling from the canal.
 - Crews replaced several of the missing and/or damaged boards at the Burnt Store Isles Lock (inlet).



Engineering

- **Serenity Garden Sidewalk at Nature Park** – The contractor has postponed the project to a future date due to technical issues. The project will be re-scheduled.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Work is complete on Santander Drive and Portofino Drive. Work will begin on Terin Court next week.
- **King Street Survey and Plan** – The survey work continues.

- **Adrienne Street Pier** – Beginning the week of Mar. 22 through Apr. 16 pending material delivery and weather permitting, construction is scheduled for rehabilitation to lift the Adrienne St. pier and place pile jackets. The pier will be closed to the public while work is being performed. It will re-open following completion. Pedestrians and cyclists are required to use extreme caution while workers are present in the right of way. For information [Engineering | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](#) or contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager, Public Works Department at (941) 575-5060 between the business hours of 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday.
- **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 \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](#) 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 has commenced with the excavation of existing materials. 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 complete in May (weather permitting).



Parks and Grounds

- **Hounds on Henry Street** – Hounds on Henry Street will be closed on Mar. 31 for maintenance and repairs. The park will re-open on Apr. 1 for normal operation.

Police

- **Volunteers in Policing (VIP)** – The VIP program contributed a total of 714 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during the month of Feb. 2021. Our volunteers are an absolutely vital part of this police department and we appreciate them greatly! 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.
- **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. 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.

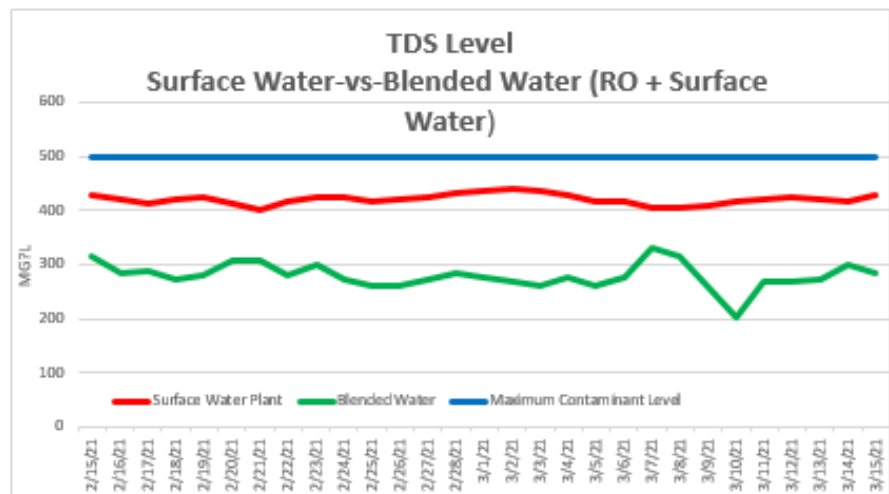
- **Volunteers in Policing (VIP) Program** – The police department has an active and diverse volunteer program including vehicle patrol, bike patrol, marine patrol, community services, and more. We are always looking for dedication volunteers. Members of the community interested in volunteering are encouraged 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

- **Spring Break Kids Camp** – CrossFit Punta Gorda hosted a Spring Break kid’s camp this week. On Thursday the kids walked from CrossFit Punta Gorda located on Manzana Avenue, off Boca Grande Boulevard, to fire station one. The kids learned about fire safety and went through a fire truck tour in the bay as well. The highlight was being able to spray the fire hose. We were happy to have the kids come by and see them participating in an active lifestyle camp.

Utilities

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



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 56.7 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 March 2020 0.00” March 2021 0.030”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 9 ppm – Total hardness 148 ppm
- TDS for Mar. 18 – Current 283 ppm, Low 283 ppm, High 653 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 448 ppm
- Reservoir Mar. 18 – Current 5.05’, Record Low 4.90’, Record High 6.45’, 55 Year Avg. 5.23’

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.

- **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:
 - ✓ Peace of Mind Pet Services, 3340 Woodthrush Drive
 - ✓ Up In Smoke Punta Gorda, 1105 Taylor Road, Unit A
 - ✓ Kelley Vacation Rental, 1588 San Marino Court