

Weekly Highlights Report May 21, 2021

City Manager

- City Manager Column – Last week I had the pleasure of speaking at the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce's Business over Breakfast. It was great to see so many business leaders starting their day at the Four Points Sheraton with networking and plenty of opportunity for information sharing and engaging questions. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to be there with you. Two of the hot topics of this week are the public hearing for the Planned Use Development (PD) for the property located at 33 and 55 Tamiami Trail and updating of the sign code.



There have been some questions about the public hearing notice posted for the property that currently includes TT's Tiki Bar. The City of Punta Gorda Planning Commission and Council will consider an amendment to the approved PD which will allow the applicant to continue to operate the existing Tiki Bar, increase the size or number of restroom trailers, increase or replace the temporary kitchen trailer or structure, retain sand volley ball courts that may be replaced with a deck and fourth Tiki Hut, and continue to use the open grass area for events. The Planning Commission public hearing will take place on May 24 at 2 p.m. The City Council public hearing will be at 9 a.m. on June 16.

Approval of this amendment to the PD benefits the City of Punta Gorda by eliminating the need for an ongoing series of temporary use permits and instead utilizes the existing PD by adopting appropriate conditions for interim uses, thereby retaining a popular waterfront destination. It will be up to the property owner/developer to determine if the use will remain in the same place/configuration at the time of the multi-family development. Any deviation from the approved PD site plan for the multi-family development would require another amendment to the PD. The original PD was approved for the hotel and multi-family development in 2006.

On May 18 City Council considered approval of a new sign ordinance. The City Attorney has recommended that the City's sign code be amended to provide for specific content-neutral regulation. The intent and purpose is to promote the public health, safety and welfare through a comprehensive system of reasonable, effective, consistent, content-neutral, and nondiscriminatory sign standards and requirements.

The draft ordinance has been updated based upon comments by Planning Commission, City Council, business owners and residents. These include limiting the size of residential flags to 24 square feet in area. It adds setback and landscape requirements for permanent ground signs as well. The new ordinance also contains definitions and regulations regarding fighting words, indecent and obscene language on signs or flags. Yard signs may be a maximum of four square feet in area and three feet in height. The placement of signs must be a minimum of 10 feet from the edge of pavement. Four signs are allowed per parcel. There is no time limit on signs. For residential flag poles 40 feet is the max pole height. Two poles are allowed on a parcel. Two flags are permitted per pole. Flags are counted toward maximum number of yard signs. Faded tattered or torn flags are prohibited.

Thank you to the staff from Urban Design, Zoning and Code Compliance, and the City Attorney, for the diligent work in preparing these two items for City Council consideration. City staff continues to preserve our small-town character while promoting diversity, economic development and sustainability

- **Memorial Day Holiday** - The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on May 31 for the Memorial Day holiday. Residents of the City of Punta Gorda will notice NO change in their trash, yardwaste and recycling collections during this holiday. Services for commercial businesses will notice NO change in trash collections
- **General Election 2021**
Qualifying week is fast approaching! The 2021 General Election will take place on Nov. 2, and will include City Council District 3 and 5. Qualifying for the 2021 General Election cycle begins Jun. 7 at noon and ends on Jun. 11 at noon.

To Qualify as a Candidate

To become a **qualified candidate**, you must be a "filed candidate" and complete the following:

1. File **Form DS-DE 9**
2. File **Form DS-DE 84**, Statement of Candidate, **within ten days of filing Form DS-DE 9** (F.S. 106.023). By filing this form the candidate acknowledges they have been provided access to read and understand the requirements of Chapter 106, F.S., a copy of which is included in the Candidate Packet.
3. Submit **CE Form 1**, Statement of Financial Interests (F.S. 99.061(5) & 112.3145(2)(a)).
4. Subscribe to a candidate's oath in writing by filing **Form DS-DE 302NP**, Candidate Oath - Nonpartisan Office (F.S. 99.021(1)(a)).
5. Pay an **election assessment fee** equal to 1% of the salary of the office being sought (must be paid prior to the end of the qualifying period) (F.S. 99.093 (1)).
6. During the qualifying period obtain the signatures on the prescribed **petition form** of at least 25, but not more than 50, registered voters who reside within the district for which election is sought (City Charter).

Note: The petition form must be obtained from the City Clerk's Office during the week of May 31 (offices closed Memorial Day) and will only be provided to filed candidates.

Candidate packets for the 2021 City General Election are now available through the City Clerk's Office, City Hall, 326 West Marion Avenue. For more information or questions regarding qualifying, please contact Karen Smith, City Clerk, at (941) 575-3369 or email pgclerk@cityofpuntagordafl.com.

- **City Council** – City Council met at 9 a.m. on May 19 at the Historic City Hall. A few of the items of interest include:
 - Received a Ceremonial Key to the City refurbished by C.J. Metcalfe
 - Approved and amended the Sign Code Ordinance
 - Annexation of the Public Works/Utilities Campus approved
 - Approved a modified concept for the Complete Street Improvements for East Virginia Avenue that eliminates the area that would have required an FPL easement from the project
 - Event Permits – COVID-19 restrictions were lifted



The meeting is available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6Nt8WZWokM>

- **Important Notice for Utility Customers** – Effective Jun. 1, pre-Covid policies of assessing penalties for late payment and shutting off water service on past due accounts will resume. This will apply to all accounts with a past due balance. Payments made by credit card will incur the same processing fee that was in place before Covid concessions were granted.
- **Comcast Update** – Comcast has completed relocating wires on an additional three poles, and have been going around addressing all the specific locations we've been sending them photos of over the past couple of weeks. They plan to continue working on all the wire relocations next week. They fixed the wires at: 2412 Sierra Lane, 301 Via Esplanade, 2346 Magdalina, 3400 Nighthawk Ct., 2612 Parisian Ct., 1256 Pine Siskin Dr., 1406 Sea Gull Ct. They still need to fix the wires at the 400 block Bal Harbor and at Whippoorwill & Albatross, so those addresses should be done by the weekend. If you have a more than one pole in your front yard and an old pole that hasn't been taken down, if wires are hanging on the new pole or any other concern about this project, please email Mayor Matthews with your name, address and contact phone and email along with a photo, and send to lmattews@cityofpungordaf1.com. The City Manager and Mayor Matthews are sharing the emails with both companies so all properties get restored.
- **Promote Punta Gorda “Small Business Spotlight”** Punta Gorda Chocolate and Wine is located at 117 Herald Ct. Suite 112 (941) 505-0479, <https://pgchocolateandwine.com/>

Products and Services offered:

Punta Gorda Chocolate and Wine showcases Haley Handcrafted Chocolates, the highest quality of artisanal chocolates, along with distinctive, extraordinary wines, craft beers, and gourmet cheeses not found in mainstream stores - premium quality, yet reasonably priced! Haley Handcrafted Chocolates are a luxurious line of small-batch truffles, molded chocolates, toffees, barks, hot chocolate and their original Famous Fabulous Fudge. All chocolates are made by hand daily to ensure quality and freshness and all are created EXCLUSIVELY in Punta Gorda, FL.

What makes your business special?

Haley Handcrafted Chocolates are a luxurious line of small-batch truffles, molded chocolates, toffees, barks, hot chocolate and their original Famous Fabulous Fudge. All chocolates are made by hand daily to ensure quality and freshness and all are created EXCLUSIVELY in Punta Gorda, FL. Haley Handcrafted Chocolates is Punta Gorda’s one and only chocolate factory! Regularly scheduled wine and craft beer tastings provide entertainment and education for locals and seasonal tourists into the world of premium wines, craft beers, meads, ciders, ports, and more.

How does your business help the community?

Punta Gorda Chocolate and Wine strives to inspire each and every patron to discover their own perfect chocolate, wine, craft beer or gourmet cheese that matches their individual taste and flavor profile. The passion of both the owners and staff produces unmatched customer service that is designed to cultivate the love and broaden the knowledge of chocolates, wines, craft beer and cheese. “We will continually strive to be Punta Gorda’s #1 choice for chocolate, wine, craft beer, & gourmet cheese for years & years to come. Come see us today,” said Patti Haley-Herndon, chocolatier/sommelier.



What facts are important for customers to know about your business?

Punta Gorda Chocolate and Wine showcases Haley Handcrafted Chocolates, the highest quality of artisanal chocolates, along with distinctive, extraordinary wines, craft beers, and gourmet cheeses not found in mainstream stores - premium quality, yet reasonably priced! Punta Gorda Chocolate and Wine is located at 117 Herald Ct. Suite 1112, Punta Gorda, FL. (Near the corner of Hwy 41 and Olympia; Free Parking Garage on Herald Ct.) Store Phone Number: (941) 505-0479 Check us out on our website: pgchocolateandwine.com

Any fun facts you would like to share about your business?

The smell of chocolate increases theta brain waves, which triggers relaxation. Eating dark chocolate every day reduces the risk of heart disease by one-third. Cannonau wine has two to three times the level of artery-scrubbing flavonoids as other wines. (Yes – Cannonau is available at Punta Gorda Chocolate & Wine!) Small doses of this antioxidant-rich beverage throughout the day could explain fewer heart attacks and lower levels of stress among men in this region of the world.

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/#>
- May 22, Girls on the Run 5K Run, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information contact kim.amontree@girlsontherun.org
- May 27, Healing Field of Honor, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information contact adairrobin@gmail.com
- May 28, Leroy’s Kickoff to Summer Fundraiser, 201 W. Marion Ave
- May 28, 29, 30, Punta Gorda Seafood & Music Festival, City Marketplace, 115 Tamiami Trail, for more information visit Paragon Festivals (paragonartevents.com)
- May 31, Memorial Day Veterans Race, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information visit www.memorialdayrace.org
- May 31, Memorial Day Car Show from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at Fisherman’s Village, 1200 W. Retta Esplanade. Contact mkting@fishville.com for more information.
- July 3, 4, Fisherman’s Village Independence Weekend Celebration, 1200 W. Retta Esplanade, for more information contact mkting@fishville.com
- July 4, Fourth-Fest Independence Day Celebration & Fireworks, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information visit www.smuggersevents.com

Lot Mowing Program

- Zones 3-16 have been completed. Work continues on Zone 1, 2, and 17-27.

Urban Design

- **Purple Heart Plaza** – The pavers at the Purple Heart Plaza located in Veterans Park have been installed. Approximately 30 pavers are currently being engraved and will be added at a later date.



- **The Planning Corner – Sign Code –**

The First Reading of the sign code re-write was approved by City Council at the May 19 Council meeting. Some amendments were made to the ordinance presented to City Council:

- Prohibited signs containing indecent, fighting words or obscene language or graphics:
 - Will include signs/flags on vehicles, vessels or apparel
- Residential flag size:
 - Limited to 24 square feet in area
 - Exception, **one flag** on the property may be a maximum of 60 square feet in area
- Signs/Flags on boats which are on a lift or in the water:
 - Exempt from total sign/flag count allowed on residential properties
 - **Not** exempt from the prohibition of fighting words, indecent or obscene language or graphics



Building Department

- **General Updates –**

- As of Apr. 30 Building has conducted 4917 building inspections this fiscal year.
- During the month of Apr. 20 single family homes were permitted for a fiscal year to date total of 82.
- With the start of our rainy season approaching increased job site inspections will be implemented to identify storm water runoff issues on open construction sites. Contractors will be notified of any items needing correction and follow up inspections will be done.
- Building has received the plans for Parkside Apartments and will begin preliminary plan review of a 297 unit apartment complex to be located at Jones Loop Road and Burnt Store Road.

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has nine projects under construction and 14 projects completed in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. All seawall replacement projects are completed for Burnt Store Isles this fiscal year. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed. View list of seawall replacements <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showpublisheddocument/11454/637352343548330000>
 - Crews filled depressions at 22 locations.
 - Crews patched/repared nine linear feet of seawall cap/seams.
 - Crews removed one large piling from the waterway.
 - Crews performed sonar reading at Bass and Snook inlet waterway channels.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Ramp Improvements** – The City annually schedules sidewalk ramp intersection improvements at various locations for accessibility. Staff and the contractor are reviewing the estimated Statements of Work prior to processing.
- **Adrienne Street Pier** – The contractor anticipates receipt of materials within two weeks. Work is scheduled accordingly upon delivery. The pier will remain closed to the public for additional work.
- **Boca Grande Drainage Improvements** – City and the consultant Engineer discussed the revision of the pending supplemental agreement to complete the design.

- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Sodding is complete on Almar Dr. and the swale work is complete with JRL Underground. The swale regrading contract is currently out for bid.
- **King Street Survey and Plan** – The survey is complete and under City review for a street plan. The surveyor invoice has been reviewed, approved and submitted for payment processing.

Parks and Grounds

- **Ponce De Leon Fishing Pier** – Staff received a call from a citizen that reported a metal object in the waterway channel at Ponce De Leon Park near the fishing pier. Staff recovered the two metal railings that were reported stolen from the fishing pier last month. The railing will be cleaned and welded back into place.



Police

- **FBI Recognition** – Punta Gorda Police Department's Lieutenant Terry Cochran, along with Lieutenant John Heck (CCSO), Sergeant Chris Tice (LCSO/FBI), and Detective Adam Taylor (NPPD), received FBI Director Certificates at a ceremony at the Public Safety Complex regarding their involvement in the joint investigation involving Ian McGuire and Bretton Osborne. This investigation led to both subjects being convicted in federal court for cyber stalking and conspiracy. McGuire was sentenced to sixty months in federal prison and Osborne was sentenced to forty-four months in federal prison. Both subjects were ordered to pay \$18,000 in restitution. Special thanks to 20th Judicial Circuit Deputy Chief Assistant State Attorney Shannon Doolity and Assistant State Attorney Jill Kuykendall for their assistance.
- **Police Officer Testing** – The police department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Aug. 23 with oral board interviews scheduled on Aug. 24 and Aug. 25. 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 Aug. 30.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Fall Semester of 2021 and Spring Semester 2022. 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.pgdjobs.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.

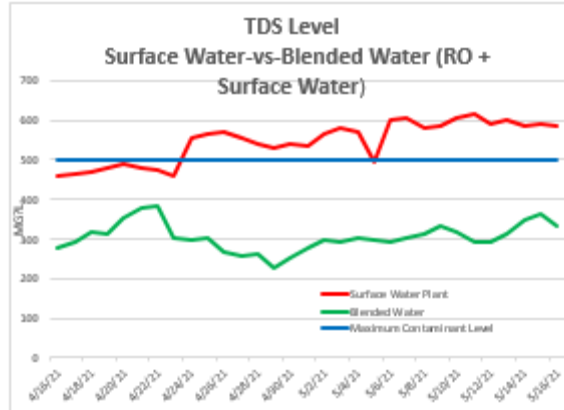
Fire Department

- **Water Safety** – As the temperature heats up, there is no question that summer is upon us. The City of Punta Gorda is the place to be in the warmer months, as we are surrounded by our beautiful Charlotte Harbor which supplies an endless amount of waterway activities to cool off in the heat. Alarmingly, a 2019 CDC report ranked Florida 6th in the nation in 2019 for unintentional drownings (according to the CDC). This highlights the necessity to take caution while participating in water activities such as swimming, kayaking, boating, etc. Preparation and safety precautions are key to ensuring that our family and friends can enjoy a summer on the water. Did you know? The majority of our members at the Punta Gorda Fire Department are Rescue Diver certified. In addition to full scuba gear, each apparatus also carries specialized Rapid Diver equipment, which is specifically designed to be quickly deployed in the event of a water emergency. With an average on-scene time of four minutes, our divers are trained and ready to respond 24/7/365 to any waterway emergency. Due to the dangerous nature of water emergencies, it is vital that responders continually train on the Rapid Diver equipment and further our knowledge on the waterways here in the City of Punta Gorda. Each member practiced donning and doffing Rapid Diver gear, and practiced rescue swimming.
- **Honor Guard Course** – Firefighter/Paramedic Rhett Anderson completed a 40-hour Honor Guard course. Rhett was one of thirty students who attended this course. Other departments in attendance were Charlotte County Fire and EMS, Charlotte County Sheriff's Office, Iona-McGregor Fire, Sarasota County Fire and EMS, West Manatee Fire, Cape Coral Fire, and Cedar Hammock Fire. This course focused on tasks performed by honor guard teams such as proper flag folding technique, posting of flags, flag presentation, conducting funerals, casket carrying, and marching. At the end of the course a competition was held between students to see who had the best techniques in casket watching, presenting of the colors, and flag folding. We are proud of Rhett for participating in this course, as he is a current member of our Honor Guard team here at the Fire Department. His new knowledge will be a valued addition to our team.



Utilities

• Groundwater R.O. Chart –



Utilities Administration

- Golf Course Boulevard and Challenger Boulevard work continued including the completion of the installation of storm drain pipe, backfilling of pipe and installation of section of 18 inch force. At 3560 Taylor Road a conflict box for storm drain and gravity sewer conflict were installed.



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 58.4 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 8.3 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 May 2020 2.26” May 2021 0.60”
- 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 May 20 – Current 308 ppm, Low 308 ppm, High 592 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 504 ppm
- Reservoir May 20 – Current 5.01’, Record Low 4.49’, Record High 6.00’, 55 Year Avg. 5.10’

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.
- **Code Enforcement** – (one regular and one alternate) Meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms. Maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more terms. Financial disclosure required. Makes recommendations to City Council on variances to City Code.
- **Burnt Store Isles Canal Advisory Committee** – Meets monthly on the 2nd Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be resident of Burnt Store Isles Canal Maintenance Assessment District. Five-member board. Three-year terms. Maximum of three terms OR partial term plus 2 more terms. Financial disclosure required.

- **Building Board** – (One contractor and one consumer advocate) Meets monthly on the 4th Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. in City Council Chambers – City residency not required. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms. Maximum of three terms OR partial term plus 2 more 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.
- **General Employees' Pension Board** – Meets quarterly and as called in Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents at-large, two general employees and one member appointed by the Board. Four-year terms – no maximum. Financial disclosure required. Charged with management of the General Employees' Pension Fund.

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:
 - Executive Options, LLC, 207 Cross Street, #103
 - Intercoast Computer Technology, 3800 Bal Harbor Blvd, Bldg 3, 311