

## Weekly Highlights Report June 4, 2021

### City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – Hurricane season is quickly approaching. The city itself makes many preparations in advance of the season to protect our assets and be able to respond and recover quickly from any storm situation. Residents also need to take similar precautions. For some, this will be the first time they need to prepare for a potential storm in Punta Gorda. Others will recall the devastation associated with Charley and Irma and the lessons learned. All residents need to take action now to be ready for hurricane season 2021.



One of our longtime residents and current Mayor Lynne Matthews among others, has compiled a comprehensive list of her best hurricane tips after having spent over 24 years in Southwest Florida. I'll highlight some of the unique actions that those in a waterfront community need to undertake when a hurricane is imminent. If you have a dock, take all items off of it and stow them away. High winds and excessively high tides mean you may never see them again if you leave them on the dock, or may see them in your living room... If you are a boat owner, make sure you double up your lines and fenders on your vessel. Secure all loose items on the decks. When attaching lines, allow for storm surge. Make sure your bilge pumps are working. If your boat is in a lift, secure lines around the boat in the lift, and raise the lift so it will not be underwater in a storm surge.

Other simple recommendations can be done well in advance of a storm. Share your contact information with neighbors and close friends to make sure you have a way to communicate after the storm. Put your storm shutters up. Make a box up with all important insurance policies, contractor phone numbers, bank accounts, investment accounts, utility company accounts, etc. so you have something to start with after the storm. Make sure you have sunblock, insect repellent, a first aid kit and tire plug kit on hand. Purchase bleach and extra cleaning supplies. Buy extra garbage bags, toilet paper and paper towels. Fill your grill's propane tanks for cooking in the event of a power outage. Have a supply of bottled water and non-perishable food for each member of your household including your pets. In the event that you need to evacuate, have a plan in place of where you will go and what you will need to bring with you, and don't wait until the last minute! Shelters fill up quickly, so be prepared in advance. The city website has a variety of printable publications, including Mayor Matthew's Tips that can aid in resident preparation available at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/residents/emergency-preparedness>.

May 28 to June 6, has been designated the 2021 Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday. During this week a variety of readiness supplies can be purchased without paying sales tax. The list of eligible items can be found on the city's website under the emergency preparedness tab. While you are on the city website be sure to sign up for Alert Punta Gorda. This service notifies residents in the event of any weather or other related emergency. Let's hope that all the named storms from Ana to Wanda don't pay a visit to Southwest Florida, but stand ready in case they do. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at [citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com](mailto:citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com) or by calling (941) 575-3302.*

- **Comcast Update** – Comcast techs fixed one wire issue reported by a resident on Marion Avenue. The team completed eight more pole transfers in PGI. They are temporarily limited in what they can do with pole transfers due to a College Board AP Exam moratorium that limits any work that would cause an internet outage on these dates: May 20, May 26, May 27, May 28, June 1, June 2, June 3, June 7, June 8, June 9, June 10 and June 11. When they disconnect from a pole to move to a new one it means splicing and also causes a brief outage of service to whoever is connected to it. Comcast is not allowed to cut power at certain times and dates during testing. 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 WITH PHOTOS to support your request, and send to [lmattthews@cityofpuntagordafl.com](mailto:lmattthews@cityofpuntagordafl.com). The City Manager and Mayor Matthews are sharing the emails with both companies so all properties get restored.
- **Boca Grande Drainage** – The City of Punta Gorda, with the assistance of the lobbying firm, Capitol Access has secured a one million dollar appropriation for the Boca Grande Boulevard area water quality improvement project. The City offers a sincere thank you to Governor Ron DeSantis, State Representative Michael Grant, State Senator Ben Albritton and State Senator Joe Gruters for their support and work on this important initiative. The project also has substantial local support through the one percent sales tax program. The project will increase community resiliency and provide necessary flood control and water quality treatment of stormwater runoff from the city's Boca Grande neighborhood. The area experiences significant flooding and the current drainage conveyance does not provide a formal measure of water quality treatment. The drainage from this area ultimately outfalls to Charlotte Harbor. The harbor and surrounding coastal areas will benefit from the project's treatment of impairments. Design and property acquisition are almost complete and construction is anticipated to start in fiscal year 2022.
- **City Council** – City Council met on June 2. Some of the items were:
  - Approved Punta Gorda Redevelopment Agency Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal year ended Sept. 30, 2020.
  - Approved Annexation of the Public Works and Utilities Campus
  - Approved Florida Power and Light Electric Charging Stations exploration
  - Approved Stop Sign at West Charlotte Avenue and Taylor Street

View the meeting at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6\\_Kqw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6_Kqw)

- **General Election 2021** – Qualifying week is fast approaching! The 2021 General Election will take place on Nov. 2, 2021, and will include City Council District 3 and 5. Qualifying for the 2021 General Election cycle begins June 7 at noon and ends on June 11 at noon. To become a **qualified candidate**, you must 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 individuals who have completed items 1 through 5 above. 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@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:pgclerk@cityofpuntafordafl.com).

- **Promote Punta Gorda “Small Business Spotlight”** – Chelsea Place Senior Care. Home Care is located at 126 E Olympia Avenue Unit 301 Punta Gorda, FL 33950 (941) 979-5288.

**Products and Services Offered** – Homemakers and companions, meal preparation, shopping and transportation. Light housekeeping, laundry and linens, medication reminders, shower and dressing assistance...available 24/7, no minimum hours.

**What makes your business special?**

We offer care from the heart.

**How does your business help the community?**

Involved in numerous nonprofit and profit community support.

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

All employees are background screened, finger printed and are our employees, not sub-contractors.



*Small*  
**Business**



**Spotlight**

## 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/#>
- June 14, Punta Gorda Elks Lodge 2606 Flag Day Ceremony at 9 am at Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit Street. Contact Bob Hahn at (941) 661-1775.
- July 3, 4, Fisherman's Village Independence Weekend Celebration, 1200 W. Retta Esplanade, for more information contact [mkting@fishville.com](mailto:mkting@fishville.com)
- July 4, Fourth-Fest Independence Day Celebration & Fireworks, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information visit [www.smugglersevents.com](http://www.smugglersevents.com)

**Lot Mowing** – A new cycle will begin on June 7 (weather permitting).

## Urban Design

- **Planning Corner – Sign Code** – The Second Reading of the Sign Code re-write was approved by City Council at the June 2 Council Meeting. The Sign Code rewrite was adopted with one minor amendment: Under section 11.2. Applicability and Exclusions, per Council's direction this was added: (14) Flags used in conjunction with cemeteries. As a reminder, the following amendments were made to the ordinance presented to City Council on May 19:
  - 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 on 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

- **A.C. Freeman House Rehabilitation Project** – Staff completed and submitted a grant application on June 1 to help in the rehabilitation of the A.C. Freeman House. City staff also hosted the consulting team for Parker, Mudgett, Smith Architects of Fort Myers at the kick-off meeting for the A. C. Freeman House Rehabilitation design project. The design project will entail an extensive in-depth building evaluation and design plans for a complete rehabilitation of the A. C. Freeman House. The comprehensive evaluation and construction design plan project are anticipated to take approximately 10 months. Once the plans are complete the actual rehabilitation work can begin. Until the rehabilitation work is completed the A. C. Freeman House will remain closed.

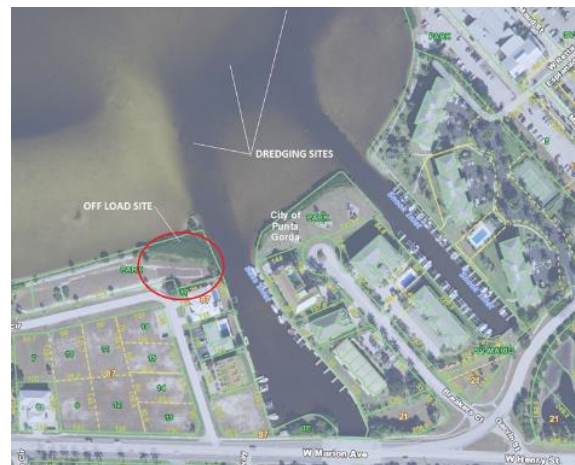


*“Brief history of the A. C. Freeman House: Structure was completed in 1903 for prominent local businessman and political leader, Augustus C. Freeman. Originally the house was located on E. Marion Avenue at Mary Street. In the mid-1980s the house was relocated two blocks away to Hargreaves Avenue at the corner of Booth Street. At that location the house was rehabilitated to serve as the offices of the Charlotte Community Foundation. In 2004 the A. C. Freeman house like many structures in Punta Gorda, received substantial damage from Hurricane Charley. The Charlotte Community Foundation not owning the land upon which the house sat and being unable to rehabilitate the structure again, donated the A. C. Freeman House to the City of Punta Gorda. In 2006-2007 the City relocated the house to 311 W Retta Esplanade completing major repairs and stabilizing the structure. Once repairs were completed the A. C. Freeman House was leased to the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce for use as their Punta Gorda office. In partnership with the Punta Gorda Historical Society period furnishings were used to decorate most of the rooms and visitors were welcomed to explore this wonderful local example of Queen Ann Style Architecture.”*

## **Public Works**

### **Canal Maintenance**

- **Bass and Snook Inlet Dredging** – Beginning June 3 through June 18 (weather and equipment operation permitting), the Bass and Snook Inlet is scheduled to be dredged. The contractor will off load dredge material at the easterly end of Elizabeth Park and then the material will be transported to another location by dump trucks. Boaters are asked to please use caution in this area during construction. For additional information on this project, please contact Canal Maintenance Supervisor, Cathy Miller, Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 between the business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- **How to Find out If Your Seawall Is Scheduled for Replacement** - Residents have been asking how they know when their seawall is scheduled for replacement and how the process works. Every year the City replaces approximately 7,000 lineal feet of seawall. By utilizing the Seawall Assessment Data, the seawall replacement program is planned a year in advance (unexpected seawall failures or seawalls that are inspected and found to be at extreme risk of failure are given top priority and may bump planned projects to the following year). The annual list of seawall replacements can be found on the Canal Maintenance website. To see if your seawall is scheduled for replacement: <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showpublisheddocument/11454/637352343548330000>.



- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has nine projects under construction and 16 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.
  - Crews filled depressions at three locations.
  - Crews patched/repaired 16’ linear feet of seawall cap/seams.
  - Crews manufactured (20) 10’ feet seawall panels.

### Engineering

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Security Systems** – A project progress meeting and discussion are scheduled to be held June 10.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Sidewalk Ramp Improvements** – The contractor is scheduled to commence work starting June 7 at various locations throughout the City.
- **Adrienne Street Pier** – The contractor has notified staff that the supplier materials ordered by the contractor are on back log for delivery due to increased demand. Work is to be scheduled accordingly upon delivery tentatively anticipated next month. The pier will remain closed to the public for additional work.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – City staff is reviewing all work completed in 2021 by JRL Underground Utilities as part of the contract close out. The swale regarding project is currently out for bid and has a scheduled bid opening date of June 4.

### Parks and Grounds

- **Hector House Plaza** – The Hector House Plaza grass area was re-sodded on June 2. The areas with snow fence will be closed to the public while the new sod is taking root. The entire process could take several weeks. The remainder of the Hector House Plaza will remain open to the public. For information on this project, please contact City of Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday.



## Police

- **Click It or Ticket** – The national Click It or Ticket campaign is winding down, but isn't over yet. Officers will be out enforcing seatbelt violations, so make sure you are wearing yours!
- **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.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.

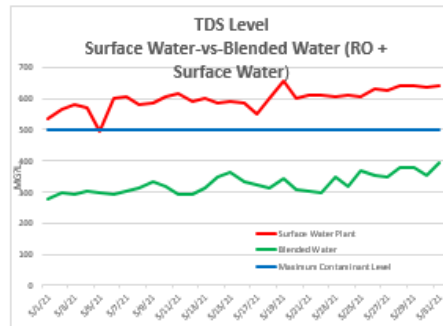


## Fire

- **Lightening Safety** – Florida has more lightning per square mile than any other state in the country. Lightning kills on average 100 people each year across the United States. Florida averages 10-13 deaths and 30-40 injuries a year. Lightning has also averaged over \$6 million in damages each year to property in Florida. Florida ranks number one in the number of deaths due to lightning, 94% of which occur between late May and end of September. Lightning can strike as far as ten miles away, about the distance you can hear thunder. **NO PLACE** outside is safe during a Thunder Storm!! Immediately move to safe shelter and stay in safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.
  - If you are caught outside *with no safe shelter anywhere nearby* the following actions *may* reduce your risk:
    - Squat low to the ground. Kneel or crouch with your hands on your knees (“lightning position”).
    - Avoid tall structures (towers, trees, fences, poles).
    - Get away from bodies of water. Leave pools, rivers, lakes, and beaches. Come ashore and land any boats, kayaks, canoes, or other watercraft.
    - Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges or peaks. Move into valleys, ravines, or low areas.
    - Avoid water and wet items, metal objects, tents, natural lightning rods (golf clubs, tractors, fishing rods, bicycles).
    - In the woods, stay under a low clump of trees. Never stand under a tall single tree in an open area.
    - If you feel your hair stand on end, drop to your knees, bend forward, and put your hands on your knees. Do not lie flat on the ground.

## Utilities

- **Groundwater R.O. update –**



## **Water Treatment Plant Operations**

- 59.7 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 8.5 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 1.00” June 2020 13.10” June 2021 1.70”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently “moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 11 ppm –Total hardness 180 ppm
- TDS for June 3 – Current 383 ppm, Low 343 ppm, High 620 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 498 ppm
- Reservoir June 3 – Current 5.07’, Record Low 4.44’, Record High 6.12’, 55 Year Avg. 5.18’

## 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 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.
- **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.
- **General Employees’ Pension Board** – (Fifth member) 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.



- **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.