

Weekly Highlights Report Nov. 12, 2021

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – With the changing of the seasons has come an influx of both new and seasonal residents to the City of Punta Gorda. Many new residents aren't familiar with the type of government structure the city operates under per our charter. The City of Punta Gorda has a City Council/City Manager form of government. The City Council is responsible for enacting ordinances and resolutions that the City Manager administers. The voters of Punta Gorda elect five Councilmembers to serve for a two-year term. Councilmembers reside in a specific District, are elected at large in staggered terms, and elections occur in November. This year district three elected Mark Kuharski, and district five elected Melissa Lockhart. The City Council elects the Mayor and Vice-Mayor at the first meeting held after an election. The City Council unanimously reappointed Lynne Matthews (district four) to Mayor and Debby Carey (district two) to Vice-Mayor. Jaha Cummings continues to serve as the district one representative.



Each of our distinguished representatives brings unique experience and backgrounds to their roles on City Council. Mayor Lynne Matthews has extensive business experience, having owned a motorcoach and tour charter company and previously working in the hospitality industry for over twenty-five years. This background, combined with years of experience on various boards and commissions within the city, has led the Mayor to understand that she can help keep the city moving forward with intelligent, common-sense growth and development while keeping the small-town charm and character that has drawn so many others here to our beautiful city. Vice-Mayor Debby Carey brings a strong teaching background, having taught in public high schools and non-profits organizations. The Vice-Mayor also served on the Board of Directors for six years as Secretary and President of Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association (PGICA). She is Secretary of the Punta

Gorda Historic Mural Society and is on the Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland board. Debby also serves on the Board of the non-profit Valerie's House. Councilmember Jaha Cummings has amassed 20 years' international experience as a strategy consultant, researcher, and trainer in the fields of international business development and cross-cultural communications in Asia, Europe, and Africa. Jaha has had a lifelong love of culture; as such, he is currently coordinating the efforts of the SWFL region's local museums, historical societies, and cultural affinity organizations to establish the Cultural Heritage Center of Southwest Florida. New Councilmember Mark Kuharski, an Eagle Scout, was born in Minneapolis, grew up in New York City, and had a 37-year career in the automotive industry. Mr. Kuharski serves as Commodore of the Isles Yacht Club and has served as a Director of the Florida Council of Yacht Clubs and as a Grant Reviewer for the Charlotte Community Foundation. Mark has often said Punta Gorda is the friendliest and most welcoming place he's ever lived. Also joining the City Council is Melissa Lockhart. Councilmember Lockhart has developed a strong network of connections in the community, having owned Helping Hands SWFL for over 13 years. She brings experience in leadership, listening to the needs of the community, and problem-solving. Melissa also served on the 2020 Sales Tax Committee for the city. Each of our City Council members' bio's reflected one common theme; this is a community in which they chose to make their home and serve. Whether it was the draw of friendly people, historic charm, or the sense of community, all recognize that Punta Gorda is a special place. Each of our City Council members has committed to continue to preserve our small-town character while promoting diversity, economic development, and sustainability.

- **Promote Punta Gorda Small Business Spotlight**



Spotlight

J. Meraki Beauty Emporium

Located at 133 West Marion Avenue

(941) 347-8287 <https://www.jmerakibeauty.com/>

Products and Services offered – We are a full-service salon and spa offering services in hair, skin, nails and more. We are home to Punta Gorda's first Blow Out Bar and onsite Bridal Suite with an outdoor venue space in the works. We offer our clients the best when it comes to products featuring Oribe products for hair skin and body, Goldwell color line, Kertain Complex, Image skin care and more.

What makes your business special? – We have created unique and intimate spaces throughout our establishment. Upon first arrival you will walk into our main space which features our styling area, Prismatic Vault and Blow Out Bar. Just down the hall awaits our relaxing and luxurious esthetics room, beyond that is our shampoo lounge and another private waiting area. Upstairs you will find our Nail Loft, Brow Bar and Bridal Suite with customized packages for any size party or event. On any beautiful Punta Gorda day you can relax outside in our beautiful court yard space.

How does your business help the community? – We are newly open and have big goals. We plan to give back by helping with community events, drives, fundraisers and more. We strongly believe in community first, as so many of our artist are Punta Gorda locals or Florida natives, and we will use our platform and resources to enrich our community in as many ways as possible.

What facts are important for customers to know about your business? – Walk-ins are welcomed and we offer complimentary consultations with any of our Artist. It's important to know that we offer the latest trends and technology our industry offers. Our Artist are provided with the latest education classes from hands on to virtual so that they can stay up to date on the latest trends to ensure our clients the upmost satisfaction.

Any fun facts you would like to share about your business? – We are all about creating a fun and uplifting experience for our clients. We feature a Bubbly Bar, a place where clients can indulge in a complementary beverage and snack upon arrival or during any services.

- **City Council** – City Council will meet on Nov. 17 at 9 a.m. at the Historic City Hall. Items of interest include:
 - Setting meeting dates for 2022
 - Vacation of a portion of Orange Road aka Mac Dine Road
 - AC Freeman House Rehabilitation Project
 - Charter Review Committee
- **Charlotte County Legislative Delegation** – Mayor Matthews presented the City of Punta Gorda Legislative Agenda to the Charlotte County delegation on Nov. 10. All City Council members attended as well as several City staff members. To see the complete list of items visit [2022 State Legislative Agenda City of Punta Gorda - FINAL.pdf \(legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com\)](https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/2022_State_Legislative_Agenda_City_of_Punta_Gorda_-_FINAL.pdf).
- **FPL strengthens energy grid serving Punta Gorda as part of reliability and storm preparedness efforts** – Florida Power and Light Company (FPL) customers in Punta Gorda continue to benefit from the company's ongoing work to strengthen the energy grid and improve service reliability. FPL investments, which include strengthening power lines and poles, trimming trees near power lines and installing smart grid technology, have helped improve day-to-day reliability more than 40% over the last decade while speeding restoration following major storms. While FPL continues to make the energy grid stronger, customers may see old poles next to the new ones because many of our poles hold wires and other equipment for other utilities, including telephone, telecommunications and cable TV services. Before FPL can remove the old poles, it must wait for the other utilities to transfer their equipment to the new ones. This causes double pole situations, which often do not affect the reliable service provided to FPL customers. After all equipment has been taken off the pole, FPL schedules the pole's removal. Visit [FPL.com/reliability](https://www.fpl.com/reliability) to learn more about FPL's reliability efforts.

Urban Design

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 Street, for all community event and class information visit <https://pgica.org/>.
- Nov. 13, CHNEP EarthEcho Water Challenge Volunteer Event, 9 a.m. at Gilchrist Park. Register early as supplies are limited, at <https://www.chnep.org/monthly-volunteer-events>.
- Nov. 29, Ditchfield Family Singers, 11330 Burnt Store Rd. for more information, visit www.bspconline.org.
- Dec. 3, Light up the Nights Christmas Celebration and Tree Lighting 5:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. Downtown Punta Gorda.
- December 3-4 - Holly Days Garden Tour, various locations, 10 to 4. For information, visit <https://pggc.org/home-tour/>.
- Dec. 31, Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, New Year's Eve Gala, 8:30 p.m., 2001 Shreve Street, sponsorship opportunities available, for more information or tickets visit <https://pgica.org/>.

Lot Mowing Program

- The City will begin a new mowing and trimming cycle on Nov. 15.

Planning

- **Public Workshop** – Punta Gorda City Council will hold a public workshop on Nov. 19, at 10 a.m. to discuss the proposed changes to the City of Punta Gorda, Code of Ordinances, Chapter 26, Land Development Regulation. City staff will provide a presentation focusing specifically on Building Height, Community Benefits Program, Architecture and Implementation. The workshop will be held in City Council Chambers at 326 West Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda, FL 33950. IF you plan on attending please register at the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldr-public-workshop-tickets-199785061497> NOTE: This is a workshop only and no formal action will be taken by City Council. The public will have an opportunity to address the Council for three minutes and present relevant information on the topic. Urban Design staff completed a draft of a new element to the City's Comprehensive Plan. Required under the provisions of Florida Statute Section 163.3177 (6)(i), the new Property Rights Element will: Identify specific property rights and state that local government will respect them. Identify the rights of people to participate in decisions that affect their lives and property. Provide standards for local government decision-making to be reliable and predictable to promote sound, long-term investments in a community. The new element will be discussed at the Nov. 22, Planning Commission and Dec. 1, City Council meetings.



- **1000 Friends of Florida Webinar** – Staff attended the "Pre-empting Local Government Authority in Florida" webinar put on by 1000 Friends of Florida. Preemption can be described as the use of state law to nullify a local government ordinance or authority. This issue is becoming increasingly problematic in Florida, as each year the legislature passes bills that supersede local authority on issues ranging from collecting impact fees, regulating building design, banning plastic bags, regulating cruise ships and more. The discussions focused on the impacts of inappropriate preemption and the need for more proactive advocacy to counter the problem.

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Canal Odor** - Don't be alarmed if you have noticed an odor floating up from your canals. The water in our canals and ponds is on the move - vertically! The surface water, which was warmed by the hot summer sun, has been cooling down as the temperatures drop causing the water to 'flip' or 'turn'. This means that the bottom (including silt, decomposing plant material and miscellaneous debris) comes to the surface bringing with it a smell of stagnant water, while the surface water goes to the bottom. This is a natural occurrence and typically lasts approximately two weeks then returns to normal.
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** - Punta Gorda Isles has 42 seawall replacement projects scheduled for this fiscal year and the seawall replacement contractor has six projects under construction. Burnt Store Isles has seven seawall replacement projects scheduled for this fiscal year and at this time none are under construction. A seawall replacement project can consist of multiple properties. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
Crews filled depressions at 24 locations.
Crews manufactured 30 (10' linear feet) seawall panels.
Crews conducted sonar depth soundings at W. Marion and Colony Point Bridge.
Crews performed channel marker check at Ponce De Leon inlet channel waterway.
- **Seawall Replacement Schedule** - The annual Seawall Replacement Work Program can be found on the City of Punta Gorda website under Canal Maintenance <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showpublisheddocument/12550/637643718591830000>. Every year the City replaces approximately 12,000 linear 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).

Engineering

- **Boca Grande Drainage Improvements** – Bi-weekly design project update meetings continue. Pending are receipt of the 90% plans for City review. The engineering firm has placed submittal to the Southwest Florida Water Management District permitting on the look ahead. A project site visit review is scheduled on Nov. 16 for a potential grant opportunity.
- **Henry Street Sidewalk** - Final construction plan revisions and drainage calculations are being completed. Coordination will continue with FDOT on work within their drainage easement and the sidewalk connection at US41.

- **Paving Program Street Resurfacing** – The contractors work schedule commenced on Nov. 9 for layout with milling and resurfacing to continue through Dec. 1 (weather and operations depending). The paving program can be found on the City of Punta Gorda website under Engineering [Paving Program | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](http://punta-gorda.fl.us). For additional information please contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager, Punta Gorda Public Works at (941)575-5060.
- **Harbor Walk West End Lighting** – The installation of five additional decorative lights street between Shreve Street and the tidal bridge at the west end of Retta Esplanade has begun. The underground conduits and light bases have been installed and the electrical wiring is expected to be installed by the end of next week.



Sanitation

- **Thanksgiving Holiday** - The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on Nov. 25 and Nov. 26, for Thanksgiving holiday. Residents and Commercial customers will notice NO CHANGE in the collection of trash, yard waste or curbside recycling. If you have any questions, please contact the Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. thru Fri.
- **Fall Back Time Change** - As a friendly reminder, daylight savings has effected the working environment of our sanitation workers. Please follow these simple instructions to ensure the safety of our sanitation workers. Remember these tips and together we can all get home safely.



Slow Down - We have all been there, so when you are behind that garbage truck on your way to work, school or home, make sure you slow down and stop if required so that your waste and recycling workers can complete their jobs safely.

Look For Workers - Make sure that your eyes are peeled and you have looked for workers before you try to pass a garbage or recycling truck.

Check For Traffic - Before you try to pass a truck, ensure that you have checked for traffic coming in the opposite direction before going around the truck. This protects the garbage truck driver as well as yourself from any potential accidents.

Avoid Distractions - Make sure you don't text and drive. Keep your eyes on the road - not the radio, changing your GPS, or looking for that "thing" that fell between the seats.

Parks and Grounds

- **Christmas Wreaths and Tree Installation** - The areas outlined in red (see picture) at the intersection of Marion Avenue and Taylor Street are blocked off to allow access for City crews and equipment to continue installing the Christmas tree. Parking spaces along Marion Avenue and Taylor Street will be opened up in the evening and on the weekends.



Police

- **Family Fun Day** – The Punta Gorda Police Department and the Punta Gorda Fire Department will be holding our second annual Family Fun Day on Dec. 4 from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Punta Gorda Public Safety Complex, located at 1410 Tamiami Trail (across from the Golden Corral). There will be a bounce house, dunk tank, crafts, lunch, and more! The entire community is invited to come out and enjoy this free event!
- **VIP Program** - The Volunteers in Policing (VIP) program contributed a total of 898 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during the month of Oct. 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, vip@pgorda.us.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Summer Semester and Fall Semester of 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 and the selection process can be competitive, so we encourage potential interns to apply today! The deadline for Summer Semester of 2022 is Mar. 15.
- **Police Officer Testing** – The police department conducts new hire testing continually in order to be prepared for future openings. We are currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. We will be holding a virtual testing process in January. Applications must be received by Jan. 5. The written exam will be completed online anytime between Jan.7 and Jan. 13, with virtual oral board exams conducted via Zoom on Jan. 24, and Jan. 25. We are currently only accepting applications from candidates who are currently law enforcement certified or Equivalency of Training (EOT) eligible.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The police department conducts new hire testing continually in order to be prepared for future openings. We are currently accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. Testing will be held on Jan. 31.
- **Internship Program** - The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Summer Semester and Fall Semester of 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 and the selection process can be competitive, so we encourage potential interns to apply today! The deadline to apply for the Summer Semester of 2022 is March 15.
- **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 dedicated 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 or for more information, please visit www.pgpdjobs.com or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.**



Fire

- **Deep Frying a Turkey** – When it comes to deep frying turkey, you want to take every precaution to keep your family and your home safe. Fried turkeys are delicious, but they come with a slew of safety issues. Thousands of fires as well as many injuries happen each year due to turkey fryer fires. The Punta Gorda Fire Department advises against using a turkey fryer. If you decide to do it anyway, these precautions should be followed;

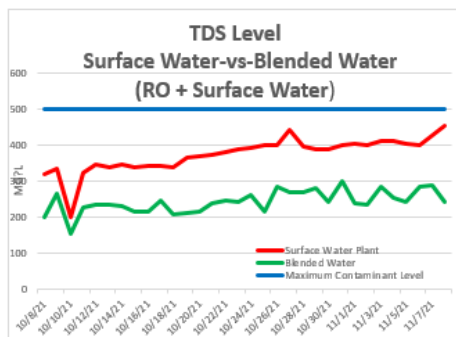


- Fryers should always be used outdoors, on a solid level surface a safe distance from buildings and flammable materials.
 - Do not overfill the fryer.
 - Never use a fryer on a wooden deck, under a patio cover, in a garage or enclosed space.
 - Never leave the fryer unattended.
 - Never let children or pets near the fryer when in use or after use as the oil can remain hot for hours.
 - Use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts and wear long sleeves and safety goggles to protect from splatter.
 - Make sure the turkey is completely thawed before it is placed in a fryer.
 - Keep all-purpose fire extinguishers nearby.
 - If a turkey fryer fire occurs, call 911 immediately.
- **Training** – The fire department has been conducting vehicle extrication training all week. The training utilizes the Jaws of Life and crews work to safely access the passenger compartment of a wrecked vehicle to remove the occupants. All of the City's fire apparatus are equipped with extrication equipment and our firefighters are trained and prepared to perform whenever they may be needed.



Utilities

- **Groundwater R.O Update** –



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 52.0 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 8.7 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 750 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 2,430 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall Nov. 2020 4.70” Nov. 2021 3.25”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "moderately hard" – Grains of Hardness 7 ppm –Total hardness 120 ppm
- TDS Nov. 10 – Current 245 ppm, Low 229 ppm, High 522 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 390 ppm
- Reservoir Nov. 10 – Current 5.38', Record Low 5.21', Record High, 5.81' 56 Year Avg. 4.97'

Wastewater Treatment

- **Maintenance** – Team members have started to lift the buildings sections and bolting together the 20 pieces to form the building that will cover the Filter Press. The contracted vendor has continued to remove the old interior coating from the North tank at the Master Pumping Facility. Team members diagnosed a radio reception problem at the Master Pumping Facility and changed the faulty antenna splitter that was causing a loss of signal to the plants SCADA system.
- **Operations** – The average daily flow for the past week was 3.19 million gallons for a total of 22.31 million gallons of wastewater being treated this week.



City Clerk

Current Board and Committee Vacancies ([Volunteer Appointment Information Form](#))

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (one regular and two alternate) Meets the fourth Tuesday at 4 p.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency is 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.
- **Code Enforcement** – (two 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.
- **Planning Commission** – (one regular) Meets monthly on the fourth Monday at 2 p.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven-member board. Three-year terms, maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more terms. Financial disclosure required. Makes recommendations to City Council on Special Exceptions, amending or extending the Comprehensive Plan, platting or subdividing land within the City and adopting and amending zoning ordinances.