

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT DECEMBER 29, 2023

City Manager

- As we approach the dawn of the New Year, it's an opportune moment to contemplate the achievements of 2023. In the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, which caused substantial damage, much of our focus this past year has centered on hurricane recovery efforts. This encompassed a spectrum of tasks, ranging from the conspicuous, such as replacing street signs and seawalls, to the less visible but equally crucial work of drafting repair scopes and negotiating contracts with vendors. The commitment to recovery has been a prevailing priority for our entire staff.



Among the noteworthy accomplishments of the year was the acquisition of a new Christmas tree and accompanying decorations, visibly enhancing the holiday spirit. The warmly received tree, along with the fully operational city clock playing Christmas music, has added to the festive ambiance for both residents and visitors. Looking ahead to the 2024 holiday season, the Public Works staff plans to extend the festive decorations to various areas across the City, spreading joy beyond downtown.

The completion of Nature Parks' Serenity Garden stands out as a beautiful addition, featuring a concrete walkway, benches, and a bicycle rack. Gratitude is extended to the PGI Green Thumbs for their meticulous care, ensuring the plantings at Nature Park consistently present their best.

ADA and security enhancements were completed at the City Hall Annex, Public Works Department, Utilities Department, and Public Safety Building. The West William Street sidewalk was finished. Investments such as these provide people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from programs, services, and activities in the City. Physical security measures protect the City's assets from threats that could cause losses or damages. The Government Center Grounds Fencing of the parking lot at City Hall is an example of a project that mitigates risk to the City.

Key facility updates unfolded in 2023, including a new audio recording system in the Punta Gorda Police Department Interview Room. The Axon Interview Room platform provides a cloud based system that integrates with the department's other existing evidence based platforms. This state of the art system provides important audio and video of the interview process to enhance police department investigations. The renovation of the Engineering Room at Public Works for improved staff accommodations and workflows was also completed. The Punta Gorda Fire Department introduced a new ladder truck into service during the calendar year. This vehicle is more than just a ladder truck. It is a Quint Fire Truck, which means it serves a dual purpose as an engine and a ladder truck. Our Quint has a 75' aerial ladder, a 1250 gallons per minute pump, a 500-gallon water tank, a hose galley, and a variety of ground ladders to perform essential lifesaving functions on the fire grounds. This apparatus is used on every structure fire and gives firefighters the ability to quickly access victims and perform vertical ventilation.

The Utilities Department also completed many projects this year. The Water Treatment Plant's two million-gallon storage tank had three baffle curtains replaced. A six-inch water main

was installed at Tee and Green. The Piper Road force main was relocated. The Water Treatment Plant's dewatering sludge press saw the replacement of drive rollers, steering cylinders, poly grid ware bars, chicane blades, wash water pump, and drive motors at the sludge press. A belt press was replaced at the Water Treatment Plant. The Wastewater Treatment Plant's sludge press was also replaced.

Looking forward, our collective efforts, involving the City Council, staff, volunteers, and vendors, remain dedicated to restoring Punta Gorda to its pre-hurricane splendor and functionality. The slated Capital Improvement Projects for 2024 encompass enhancements to City parks and pathways, additional sidewalk construction, improvements to Virginia Ave., ADA intersection treatments, Historic City Hall rehabilitation, AC Freeman House preservation, utility service delivery enhancement, and water and wastewater infrastructure improvement. As we usher in 2024, we are poised to tackle its challenges. I wish everyone a Happy New Year and encourage all to enjoy Florida's Harborside Hometown. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or by calling the main office line at (941) 575-3302.*

- **Holiday Closure** – The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on Jan. 1 for the New Year's Holiday. Residents of the City of Punta Gorda will notice No Change in their trash, recycling, or yard waste collections during this holiday. There will be No Collection for commercial customers of the City of Punta Gorda on Jan. 1, for the New Year's Holiday. If you have any questions, please contact the *Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 during the hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.*
- **Temporary Park Closure** – Beginning Dec. 20 at 1:30 p.m., the pickleball courts located at Gilchrist Park will be temporarily closed until further notice. The closing is required for regular maintenance.
- **City Council Meeting** – City Council will meet at 9 a.m. on Jan. 3, at the Military Heritage Museum. A few of the items of interest include:
 - Cooper St Rec Center
 - Park Hours Ordinance Amendment
 - Progress update on Capital Improvement Projects
 - Flooding in the Historic District



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 [Upcoming Events – Military Heritage Museum](#)
- Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, 2001 Shreve Street; for all community events and class information, visit <https://pgica.org/>.
- The Visual Arts Center events can be accessed at [Welcome to the Visual Arts Center of Punta Gorda, FL \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)
- Nov. 25 through Dec. 30, Kiwanis Christmas Card Lane, Gilchrist Park.
- Jan. 5-7, Snowbird Arts and Craft Festival, Gilchrist Park. For additional information, visit <https://mypromotions.showapplications.com/>
- Jan. 6, Smoke on the River BBQ Festival, Laishley Park. For additional information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/florida-outdoor-education-foundation-29239468505>

- Jan. 12 – 14, Punta Gorda Seafood and Music Festival, Laishley Park. For additional information, visit <https://www.paragonfestivals.com/>.
- Jan. 15, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade and Rally. Start time is 11 a.m. from the Charlotte Harbor Event Center and the parade ends at New Operation Cooper Street.
- Jan. 20 – 21, Sullivan Street Craft Fair, Sullivan Street. For additional information, visit <https://www.artfestival.com/festivals/Punta-gorda-sullivan-street-craft-festival>
- Jan. 25 – Team Punta Gorda Annual Community Meeting, 6 p.m. at the Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association. For additional information visit <https://teampuntagorda.org/annual-community-meeting/>.
- Jan. 27, Chili and Beer Festival, Laishley Park. For additional information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/florida-outdoor-education-foundation-29239468505>
- Feb 3 - Share the Love for the Kids 2024 Home Tour from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Celebrating 15 years of raising over \$600,000 to benefits Children's Charities of Charlotte County. [Facebook](#)

Lot Mowing Program

- The City will begin a new mowing cycle on Jan 2.
- **Planning Corner** – Punta Gorda has a unique and rich history which the Punta Gorda Mural Society highlights with over 30 murals around town. The Mural Society’s latest mural is a renewal of a mural at Laishley Park that celebrates the history of the bridges crossing Charlotte Harbor. In partnership with the City the Mural Society will incorporate the bronze bridge dedication plaque from the 2nd bridge to cross the Harbor the 1931 Barron Collier Bridge. This original bronze plaque was donated to the City in 2019 by long time area resident Helen Shirley. Mrs. Shirley and her daughter rescued the plaque after construction crews discarded the plaque along the shoreline of the Harbor during the demolition of the 1931 bridge in the early 1980s. Keeping the plaque safe for nearly 40 years, Mrs. Shirley donated the plaque to the City with the stipulation that this plaque be available for public viewing. The Punta Gorda Mural Society has funded the restoration of this antique bronze plaque and is assisting the City in fulfilling its promise to put the plaque back on public display. *Photo of Plaque (unrestored):*



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Concept image of renewed Harbor Bridges Mural (Punta Gorda Mural Society)

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Channel Marker 1 Ponce Inlet** – Please be advised that Channel Marker 1 located in the Ponce Inlet has been damaged. The channel marker is lying mostly in the water and may be difficult

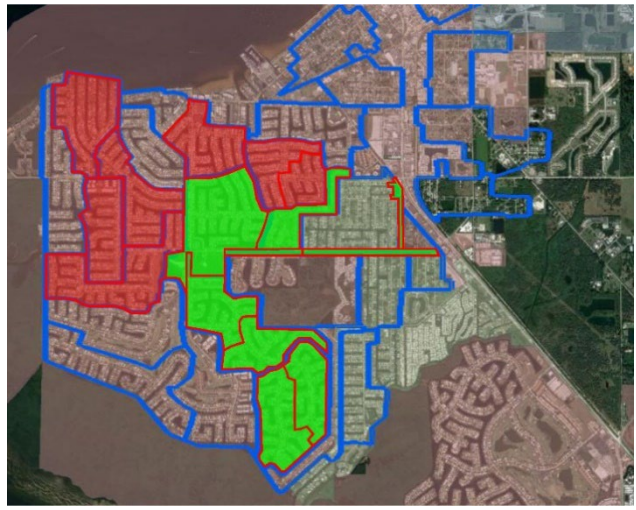
to see. Crews have attached a reflective orange buoy to locate the channel marker. Boaters are asked to be cautious in these areas until the Channel Marker can be removed and eventually replaced.

- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Canal Maintenance crews manufactured 40 seawall panels, and filled depressions at 15 locations.
- **Dockside Dredging** – Property owners that are listed on the Hurricane Ian Seawall Damage list will not be allowed to have dockside dredging performed adjacent to the seawall until the seawall has been repaired. Any dredging along the damaged seawall may cause damage.
- **Stabilizing Erosion** – Just a friendly reminder for property owners to regularly check the condition of their tarps or plastic that is protecting the eroded areas. Tarps and plastic tend to become brittle in the sun and may start falling apart. Our area is still experiencing rain events and plastic will help keep the soil in place preventing further erosion.
- **Canal Maintenance Seawall Failure Update** – Construction schedules have been updated and are posted on the Canal Maintenance website for the next six months look ahead. There are 26 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 28 projects completed, and five projects under construction with 10 completed in Burnt Store Isles.
- **Establishing sod after seawall replacement** – Placing the sod is the final phase of seawall replacement construction. As per the City ordinance, property owners are responsible for establishing the sod after it has been placed and the City will not reimburse the owners for their water usage.
- **Vessel Speeds** – Canal Maintenance is asking people to be mindful of the current situation in the canals with seawalls being damaged. City code states that the operation of vessels in the canals shall be Slow Speed Minimum Wake in the waterways within the City limits. The speed and operation in the Ponce Inlet, Pompano Inlet, Bass, and Snook Inlet are Idle Speed and No Wake. Wakes from watercraft can cause additional erosion and damage to seawalls already compromised.
- **Dock Match Program** – The Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor Boaters Alliance has created a program that connects boat owners who need a temporary relocation of their boats with owners that have available dock space. This information can be found at [Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance \(boat2puntagorda.org\)](http://PuntaGordaBoatersAlliance(boat2puntagorda.org)) click on the Dock Match button for information.

Engineering

- **Swale Regrading** – The swale contractor has completed excavating Raven Ct. and Albatross they will be watering the sod for the next 30 days. They have excavated approximately 16,000 SF this fiscal year. The contractor has started to grade Rio Villa and will be excavating 15,900 SF to the proper elevations and installing new sod. Engineering is in the process of reviewing the videos for the 2024 swale program.
- **Ponce de Leon** – The new boardwalk and East fishing pier has opened to the public. The West fishing pier has been closed for the contractor to rehab the piles under the fishing pier and to add bump outs for ADA with new railings. The contractor has poured the concrete bump outs and has finished the pile repair. They are installing the new handrail to meet ADA for the bump outs. Please take extra caution while driving through the park due to construction personnel and equipment.
- **Fiber Optic Internet Network** – The fiber optic internet provider HyperFiber has been issued permits for a portion of the construction project to install a citywide fiber optic internet network within the city right of way. This project will be under construction during the next several months as they install the network citywide. They are currently working in the areas highlighted in red below. The green area is where the work is completed and their permit has been inspected

for final by the engineering department. Additional areas are scheduled to be final in the next two weeks. The blue areas are where the installation will be taking place as the project progresses. Initially, you will see utility markings within the city right of way, followed by the directional drilling of the fiber optic conduit. Fiber optic boxes will be installed in the right of way or easement at the edge of your property. Once the installation of the underground and service points has been completed for the entire sector, crews will then return to individual locations for the restoration of sod. This will take place at the end of construction in each sector. Please be patient and allow time for the restoration. The city engineering department will be performing spot inspections during construction as well as a final inspection when restoration is complete to ensure the contractor's restoration meets the City's requirements. HyperFiber has provided a telephone number to call if citizens have questions or concerns about the project and installation. Please contact HyperFiber's Scott Jackson at (239) 887-5379. Please use extra caution while driving through the project area due to construction personnel and equipment.



Right of Way

- Crews continue to work on replacing a drainage pipe at Hibiscus Dr., and Luna Ct. Crews have been preparing for the upcoming New Year's Celebration at Fishermans Village. Due to the recent rain events, the drainage repair at Bal Harbor Blvd., between Marion Ave, and Aquí Esta Dr will be rescheduled into early Jan 2024.

Sanitation

- **Christmas and New Year's Holiday** – The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on Jan 1 for the New Year's Holiday. Residents of the City of Punta Gorda will notice No Change in their trash, recycling, or yard waste collections during this holiday. There will be No Collection for commercial customers of the City of Punta Gorda on Jan 1, for the New Year's Holiday. If you have any questions, please contact the *Public Works Department* at (941) 575-5050 during the hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- **Recycling During the Holidays** – Waste management would like to remind existing and new customers that; According to the U.S the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Americans throw away 25 percent more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's than any other time of the year.
- **Recycling** - Make sure your plastic shopping bags go back to local retail stores. Plastic bags don't belong in curbside recycling containers. For all those holiday shipments direct to your house, be sure to break down your cardboard boxes before placing them in your recycling container so you have room for all your other clean and dry recyclables.
- **Wrapping Paper** - Avoid putting the wrong things in your recycling container. This includes items like bubble wrap and lights, both of which can get tangled in recycling sorting equipment and create a safety hazard for our employees. Foil, metallic, or glitter accent wrapping paper is not recyclable. Ribbons, bows, tissue paper flocked wrapping paper, foil wrapping paper, and Glitter wrap must go in with the regular trash.
- **Christmas Trees** – for the disposal of a real Christmas tree, place the tree at the curb for collection on your regular yard waste collection day. All decorations and lights must be removed before placing the tree out for collection. Artificial trees will be collected on your regular household trash day.



- **Lithium Batteries** – Do not place lithium batteries into the recycling cart or plastics containing lithium batteries such as toys. These can and will cause truck fires.

Police

- **New Year’s Eve** – Punta Gorda Police Officers will be increasing enforcement efforts for the annual New Year’s Eve celebrations. Additional officers will be on patrol to make sure everyone is having a safe and happy New Year’s Eve.
- **Family Fun Day** – The Punta Gorda Police Department and the Punta Gorda Fire Department have rescheduled the third annual Family Fun Day to Jan 6, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. The event will take place at the Punta Gorda Public Safety Complex, located at 1410 Tamiami Trail (across from the Golden Corral). There will be bounce houses, a dunk tank, crafts, food, k9 demos, bike helmet fittings, music, and more! The entire community is invited to come out and enjoy this completely free event!



OPEN POSITIONS

- **Police Officer Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. The virtual testing process will take place in February. Applications must be received by Jan. 26. The written exam will be completed online between Feb. 2, and Feb. 9, and virtual oral board exams will be conducted via Zoom on Feb. 22. The department is accepting applications from certified and non-certified candidates.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The police department will be conducting new hire testing continually to be prepared for future openings. Currently, the department is accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. The exam will be held on the morning of Mar. 14, beginning at 9 a.m. Applications must be received by Mar. 1.
- **Internship Program** - The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Summer Semester of 2024. 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! **To apply for employment or more information, please visit www.pgpdjobs.com or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.**

The virtual

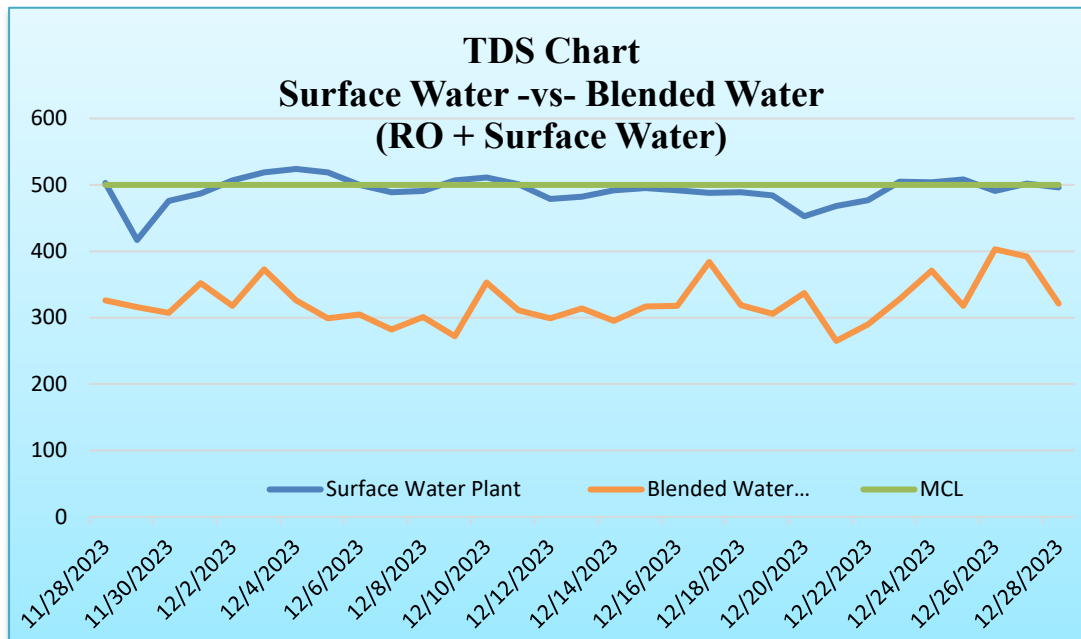
Fire

- **Don’t let the Christmas Magic turn Tragic!** - Taking down the Christmas tree is not nearly as much fun as putting it up. However, the longer a live tree stays up, the greater the fire hazard it becomes. Live trees typically last about three weeks and then start to dry out. As these trees dry out they can become extremely flammable. It’s best to undecorate and dispose of your tree before it starts changing colors and before needles start to fall off. Live Christmas Trees can be disposed of by placing them out by the road on your designated yard waste day. Please do not burn Christmas Trees in a fireplace or wood stove. As always stay safe and Happy Holidays.



Utilities

- **R.O. + Surface Water**



Administration

- **Leaks** – If you notice a water or sewer leak outside of normal business hours please call the after- hours number (941) 575-5070 or the Water Treatment Plant at (941) 639-2057.

Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 45.4 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.5 MG daily average.
- **Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect** – Receiving 700 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 700 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- **Rainfall** – Dec. 2022 1.37" Dec. 2023 4.09"
- **Hardness** – Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 10 –Total hardness. 184 ppm
- **TDS** – Dec. 28 Current 321 ppm. Low 222 ppm, High 589 ppm. 13 year average 428 ppm.
- **Reservoir** – Dec. 28 Current 5.40", Record Low .492", Record High, 6.13" 58 Year Average 5.18"
- **Water Shortage** – Southwest Florida Water Management District has declared a Modified Phase I Water Shortage Order. The Modified Phase I Water Shortage Order does not change allowable watering schedules for most counties, however it does prohibit "wasteful and unnecessary" water use and twice-per-week lawn watering schedules remain in effect except where stricter measures have been imposed by local governments. Residents are asked to check their irrigation systems to ensure they are working properly. This means testing and repairing broken pipes and leaks, and fixing damaged or tilted sprinkler heads. Residents should also check their irrigation timer to ensure the settings are correct and the rain sensor is working properly. If you are out and about and find an irrigation system operating outside of the regulated times/dates, please attempt to contact the property owner/manager and advise them of the regulations. That will be a first verbal warning. If the same address is found to be operating outside of the regulated times/dates again, citations can be issued per: Chapter 9A, Section § 9A-10 and 9A-13 (a) (15) 15. Any condition in violation of uses of water during water emergency within and without the City limits. First Offense \$25.00, Second Offense \$50.00, Third Offense \$250.00. Twice-per-week watering allows customers additional flexibility for determining when to water. Residents are encouraged to water only if their lawn and landscape needs it and to turn off irrigation systems when rain is forecasted. Some of the signs that a lawn needs water include a blue-gray appearance, blades folded in half lengthwise and footprints remaining on the lawn for several minutes after walking on it. The District encourages water

conservation year-round, and offers many tips to reduce water use and additional information on our website at WaterMatters.org/Water101 or [Water Restrictions | City of Punta Gorda, FL](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand watering and micro-irrigation of plants (other than lawns) can be done on any day and any time. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawn watering is limited to no more than twice per week. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawn watering days and times for City residents are as follows: 		
Addresses ending in 0 and 1	Monday and Thursday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
Addresses ending in 2 and 3	Tuesday and Friday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
Addresses ending in 4 and 5	Wednesday and Saturday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
Addresses ending in 6 and 7	Thursday and Sunday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
Addresses ending in 8 and 9	Friday and Tuesday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
Addresses ending in a letter or location without a discernable address	Friday and Tuesday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.

New Lawns and Plants New lawns and plants have a "30-30" establishment period. On the day of installation, watering is allowed on any day at any time. During the second 30 days, watering is allowed three days per week: even-numbered addresses may water on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday; odd-numbered addresses may water Monday, Wednesday and Saturday; and locations without a discernable address may water on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday.

City Clerk

- **Current Board and Committee Vacancies**

If you are interested in serving on a board or committee, please visit our online portal to complete an online application at <https://puntagorda.granicus.com/boards/forms/650/apply/>.

- **Code Enforcement Board** (one regular) – Meets the fourth Wednesday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms - maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more terms. Financial disclosure required. Hears and decides alleged violations of the City Code of Ordinances.
- **General Employees’ Pension Board** (one resident representative) – Meets quarterly and as called in Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents at-large, two pension plan members and one member 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 alternate) – Meets the fourth Thursday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms - maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more 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 archaeological preservation and its community benefits.
- **Planning Commission** (one regular and one alternate) – Meets the fourth Monday at 2 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes

recommendations to City Council with regard to amending, extending or adding to the comprehensive plan for the physical development of the City, platting or subdividing land within the City and adopting and amending a zoning ordinance.

- **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:

- Lingerman Properties LLC, 3251 White Ibis Court
- 3671 S Crete LLC, 3671 South Crete Drive