

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT JANUARY 12, 2024

City Manager

- The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Punta Gorda for its annual comprehensive financial report for the September 30, 2022 fiscal year. The report has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the program's high standards, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the report. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.



Finance is a service department responsible for maintaining the integrity of the financial functions within the city. Functions include accounting, auditing, financial reporting, cash management, accounts payable and payroll service to all the city departments. Other responsibilities include cash and investment management functions and internal audit. The department is the custodian of all city funds. Responsibilities include budget preparation and administration on a day-to-day basis and the preparation of periodic and annual financial statements.

The Finance Department's staff takes special care to create a transparent budget with clear policy goals and utilize the strategic plan as a strong policy framework. Evaluators found the organization-wide strategic goals and strategies that address long-term concerns and issues and provide the context for decisions within the annual budget to be outstanding. Additionally, the GFOA evaluators saw the performance link to the strategic plans as excellent.

The Finance Department has also been rated as outstanding in demonstrating the status and descriptions of the financial policies. The budget contains statistical and supplemental data describing the organization, community, and populations. This section was characterized as informative and interesting to the citizen stakeholders, legislators, and administration of the City of Punta Gorda. Previous evaluators also highlighted the good capital project descriptions, including community and operating impacts, and the excellent inclusion of risk analysis. It also noted the excellent modeling of staffing needs in the General Fund forecast. The discussion of how forecasts affect the budget and other plans and issues and the implications for current and future budgets and operations have been found to be notable.

Our budget is driven by our mission to preserve and enhance Punta Gorda's identity as a vibrant waterfront community, unique in character and history, and as a desirable place to live, work and visit. As the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY2025) budget is developed section by section, the opportunity for feedback and public comments is provided at the City Council meetings and is welcome at the email below or by phone. Information about the FY2024 current budget and historical budgets is available at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/finance/financial-information-58>.

I want to thank our elected officials and city staff for their efforts that have resulted in receiving the GFAO Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award. I look forward to the continued discussions throughout the FY2025 budget process. Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or by calling (941) 575-3302.

- **City Council Meeting** – The City Council will meet at 9 a.m. on Jan. 17, at the Military Heritage Museum. The meeting. A few of the items of interest include:
 - Tiki Point Living Shoreline Grant Agreement
 - Vertical Oyster Gardening
 - Award of contract to Boyette and Miller Construction for Ian repairs for the Utilities and Public Works Administration Buildings
 - Acceptance of a Fire House Subs Public Safety Foundation grant award for purchase of a rapid response vehicle
- **Billing and Collections and Utilities** – The City of Punta Gorda continues efforts to bring all Advanced Metering Infrastructure to full functionality. The vendor conducted additional training with Billing and Collections staff and will be notifying the City regarding gateways and areas with a low reporting percentages weekly. Bi-weekly reports of ETRUS’s low voltage will identify situations where batteries need to be changed. As soon as costs and lead-time for inventory are determined, Zenner will likely be sending staff to assist City crews with necessary replacements of equipment.

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 \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)
- 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 has begun a new mowing (trimming and/or edging) cycle (weather permitting).

- PGI (Bal Harbor Boulevard, Deborah Drive, Ryan Boulevard, Suzi Street, and Casey Key Drive)
- PGI Bird Section (Almar Drive, Albatross Drive, Whippoorwill Boulevard, and Turtle Dove

- Boulevard)
- Colony Point (Colony Point Drive, West Marion Avenue, Socorro Drive, and Coronado Drive)
- PGI (Magdalina Drive, Via Vento, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive)
- Burnt Store Isles (Monaco Dr, Tripoli Blvd, Madrid Blvd, and Macedonia Dr)
- Burnt Store Meadows (Areas of Tamiami Tr, N. Blue Sage, S. Blue Sage, Royal Poinciana, and Gold Tree)
- Downtown and Historic District (W. Marion Ave., W. Olympia Ave., Shreve St., and Harvey St.)
- The Historic District East of 41 and the area behind Dunkin Donuts (E. Marion Ave., E Olympia Ave., Narranja St., E Henry St., and Cooper St.)

- **Planning Corner – Short-term/Vacation Rental Information**

– The rental of an entire residential dwelling unit for any period of time is permitted as there is no prohibition within the Punta Gorda Code. Florida Legislature adopted legislation in 2011 that prohibits a municipality from adopting new regulations for short-term rentals. The rental of a room or rooms is considered a rooming and boarding house and is not permitted per Chapter 26. In order to operate a Rooming and Boarding house, the property must be located within either the General Multi-family or City Center zoning district, and Special Exception approval is required. All renters must abide by any codes in effect at the time of their rental. If an alleged violation (i.e. garbage cans left out, parking on the grass, boat parking, etc.) occurs during normal business hours, the complainant can contact the Code Compliance office, (941) 575-3352, however, the complainant needs to be aware that anonymous complaints can no longer be submitted, (Florida Statute 162, 162.06(1)(b) and 162.21(3)(b), adopted July 1, 2021). If the violation is after normal business hours, the non-emergency Police number can be used, (941) 639-4111. A Business Tax Receipt (BTR) is required if the rental is for less than 30 days or 1 month at a time more than 3 times per year. The vacation rental must also be licensed with the State.



Public Works

Canal Maintenance

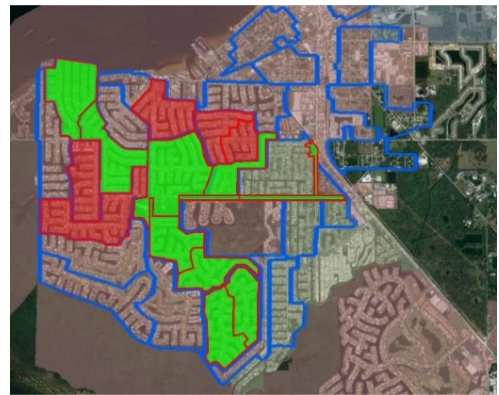
- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Canal Maintenance crews filled depressions at five locations and removed debris and navigable hazards from the Burnt Store Isles canals. Crews manufactured 20 seawall panels.
- **Dockside Dredging** – Property owners that are listed on the Hurricane Ian Seawall Damage 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.com) click on the Dock Match button for information.

Engineering

- **Swale Regrading** – The contractor has started to grade Rio Villa and will be excavating 15,900 SF to the proper elevations and installing new sod. They have completed grading and sodding half the project on Rio Villa, and will finish the second half first part of next week. They have excavated approximately 16,000 SF this fiscal year. 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

- **Update** – Crews continue to work on replacing a drainage pipe at Hibiscus Dr., and Luna Ct. Vactor work along the historical district from 41 S to Shreve St, and from Retta Esplanade to Virginia Ave. Crews are preparing for the Harbor Hustle 5k run on Sunday, and the MLK parade on Monday. Crews continue to work on replacing a drainage pipe at Hibiscus Dr., and Luna Ct. Crews have removed all of the barriers from the New Year's Celebration at Fisherman Village. Vactor work along Rio Villa and Almar Dr has been completed. As well as a drainage repair on Almar Dr. Due to the recent rain events, the drainage repair at Bal Harbor Blvd., between Marion Ave, and Aqui Esta Dr will be rescheduled into early Jan 2024.

Sanitation

- **Collection Time** – As a reminder, collection times may vary based on numerous factors. Sanitation encounters problems from time to time such as trucks being down for service, staffing issues or weather conditions. In order to maintain the best level of service, we kindly remind residents to have trash, yard waste and recycling curbside by 6 a.m. on the day of service or the night before. Staff is not always available to return the same day to collect a late put-out during these instances. Thank you for your continued cooperation.
- **Tree Removal** – Tree removal and lot clearing is NOT a part of your regular service. If you have a whole tree removed you must first contact Urban Design to obtain a permit (941) 575-3372 or [Tree Removal Permit Request | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us/Tree-Removal-Permit-Request). The company that removes the tree or the property owner is responsible for hauling away the remains. The City does not collect whole tree remains or lot clearing remains.
- **Whole House Cleanouts** – The City does not collect large bulk quantity of items from a whole house clean outs, garage clean-outs, renovations, remodels, ejections, etc.

Police

- **Nine p.m. Routine** – Help the police department fight crimes of opportunity by starting a new 9 p.m. routine for the new year. The majority of theft offenses are from unlocked vehicles and homes. Take a few minutes each night to make sure your valuables are safe.



- **VIP Program** – The Volunteers In Policing (VIP) program contributed a total of 755 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during December of 2023. Our volunteers are a vital part of this police department and we appreciate them greatly! Community members interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at (941) 575-5536 or by emailing vip@pgorda.us.

Open Positions

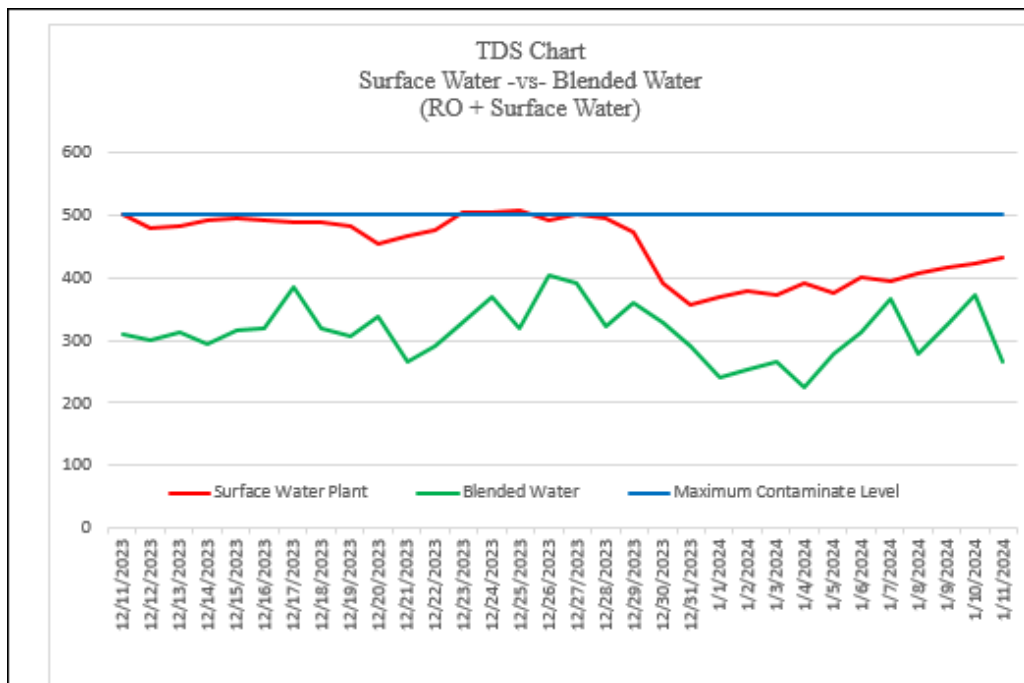
- **Police Officer Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. A virtual testing process will take place in February. Applications must be received by Jan. 26. The written exam will be completed online between Feb. 2, and Feb. 9, and virtual oral board exams will be conducted via Zoom on Feb. 27. 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.**

Fire

- **Choking Prevention and Rescue Tips** – According to Injury Facts, choking is the fourth leading cause of unintentional injury death. Of the 3,000 people who died from choking in 2020, 1,430 were older than 74. Food is often responsible for choking incidents in the elderly. Living alone, and having dentures or difficulty swallowing can increase risk. If you see someone clutching their throat, coughing, gagging, wheezing or passed out, would you know what to do?
 - The Heimlich Maneuver – If a person is coughing forcefully, encourage continued coughing to clear the object. A person who can't cough, speak or breathe, however, needs immediate help. Ask if they are choking and let them know you will use abdominal thrusts, also known as the Heimlich maneuver, to prevent suffocation. The procedure is not recommended for children younger than one. Have someone call 911. Stand behind the victim with one leg forward between the victim's legs. For a child, move down to their level and keep your head to one side. Reach around the abdomen and locate the navel. Place the thumb side of your fist against the abdomen just above the navel. Grasp your fist with your other hand and thrust inward and upward into the victim's abdomen with quick jerks. For a responsive pregnant victim, or any victim you cannot get your arms around or for whom abdominal thrusts are not effective, give chest thrusts from behind; avoid squeezing the ribs with your arms. Continue thrusts until the victim expels the object or becomes unresponsive. Even after choking stops, seek medical attention. A few simple behaviors, like chewing food slowly and not drinking too much alcohol, can help prevent choking. Children, however, tend to choke on not only food, but toys and other household items.
 - Unresponsive Victims and CPR – If the victim is or becomes unresponsive, lower the person to the ground, expose the chest and start CPR. Look inside the mouth and remove any objects. Tilt the head and lift the chin to open the airway. Compress the chest about 2 inches deep, at a rate of at least 100 per minute while. Continue compressions until the victim wakes up, an AED is brought to the scene or professional help arrives. For more information on how you could save a life contact the Punta Gorda Fire Department about our FREE Family and Friends CPR class at (941) 575-5529.

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

- 48.3 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.9 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** – Jan. 2023 0.71" Jan. 2024 1.34"
- **Hardness** – Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 9 –Total hardness 132 ppm
- **TDS** – Jan. 11 Current 266 ppm. Low 214 ppm. High 590 ppm. 13 year average 432 ppm.
- **Reservoir** – Jan. 11 Current 5.28", Record Low .492", Record High, 5.97" 58 Year Average 5.16"
- **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/>.

- **Building Board** (1 contractor) – Meets the fourth Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. in Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms – maximum of three terms OR partial term plus 2 more terms. Reviews enforcement of all codes related to construction standards and acts as condemnation board in matters of violation of minimum standards. Hears alleged complaints against contractors.
- **Code Enforcement Board** (1 regular) – Meets the fourth Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. in Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms - maximum of three terms OR partial term plus 2 more terms. Financial disclosure required. Hears and decides alleged violations of the City Code of Ordinances.
- **Firefighters' Pension Board** (1 regular) – 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 Firefighters' Pension Fund.
- **General Employees' Pension Board** (1 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** (1 regular and 2 alternate) – Meets the fourth Thursday at 9:00 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms - maximum of three terms OR partial term plus 2 more terms. Identifies for the 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** (1 regular and 1 alternate) – Meets the fourth Monday at 2 p.m. in 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.