

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

May 3, 2024

City Manager

- The City of Punta Gorda has been known as the Hibiscus City since 1926. In that year, Harry R. Goulding provided hibiscus plantings throughout the city. Harry Goulding made Punta Gorda his home and was known by many for his world-class, award-winning hybrid hibiscus plants, growing some 60,000 varieties of hibiscus over 60 years. He won many accolades and awards, including the prestigious American Hibiscus Society show's "Best in the World" category five times.

To continue efforts to highlight the City's designation as the Hibiscus City, the 20th Annual Hibiscus Festival will be held in Gilchrist Park from May 3, through May 5, and includes a Friday evening concert, unveiling the King and Queen of Hibiscus on Saturday, plant sales and continuous music on Saturday and Sunday, as well as food vendors and other activities.

The City Council of Punta Gorda has proclaimed May 4, as Hibiscus Day. They encourage all residents to plant hibiscus to beautify the city and continue the tradition that began many years ago. During the Hibiscus Festival, Gilchrist Park will be filled with plants that are being sold from some of the finest nurseries around. Vendors are happy to answer questions about how to make newly purchased hibiscus plants thrive.

The event will also feature a craft show filled with jewelry, yard art, pottery, produce, and much more. Unique food vendors will also be onsite, featuring a variety of menu options. The music featured at the Hibiscus Festival is a draw all on its own. There is music on all three days of the festival. A complete schedule is available at <https://thehibiscusfestival.com/music-vendors/>.

Don't miss the Lil' Miss Hibiscus Pageant at 9 a.m. on Sat. on the Hibiscus Stage. Little girls and young ladies who have registered for the pageant come dressed in their favorite tropical attire. All who participate are provided a token of appreciation and a warm welcome from the crowd.

The proceeds from the Hibiscus Festival benefit the Punta Gorda Historical Society (PGHS). PGHS protects historic properties representing our diverse cultural experience by directly acting and inspiring broad public support. They are a privately funded nonprofit organization working to preserve Punta Gorda's historic homes and buildings. They are the cause that inspires others to preserve the places where history happened. The cause that connects us to our diverse pasts, weaving a multi-cultural area together. They are a leading voice for preservation, restoration, and education, they are the cause for people preserving historical homes and buildings.

The Hibiscus Festival holds a unique and cherished place in our community, serving as a vibrant celebration of local culture, tradition, and unity. The festive gathering showcases our city's distinctive flavors, music, and arts and fosters a sense of belonging and pride among residents. It is a great place to reconnect with neighbors, make new friends, and create memories. It is festivals like this that 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. *City Manager Greg Murray can be contacted at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or the main office line (941) 575-3302.*



- **Waste Water Treatment Plant Project (WwTP)** – Work continues on the WwTP efficiency project. Crews are working on the bioreactor. Eight of the 15 concrete slabs have been poured equating to 2800 yards of concrete, or 280 truckloads. Three new clarifiers are also under construction.



The second photo shows the 36" clarifier effluent line being installed. This

and required some careful planning and execution by the contractors.

line runs through the existing plant

- **Henry Street Force Main Project** – Please be advised the contractor working on Henry St Force Main project will have the road closed effective May 6, until further notice on W. Henry St between W. Olympia Ave and W. Marion Ave. Residents and emergency vehicles will have limited access. Motorists are encouraged to drive with extreme caution while in this area. Detour signs will be posted. For additional information on this project, please contact Robert Ruth, Utilities project manager at (941) 575-5088 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Mon. through Fri.
- **City Council** – City Council will meet on May 15, at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum.

Human Resources

- **Open Positions** – The City of Punta Gorda offers a very generous benefit package to include medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and a defined contribution retirement plan with matching contributions. Currently hiring for a professional position in **Utilities Maintenance Worker II – Water Treatment Plant** - A skilled laborer position responsible for the maintenance and repair of water treatment plant equipment and systems. Maintain plant grounds and buildings. Performs plumbing repairs and construction on treatment facilities and grounds.
- **Clean Air Month** - Is observed in May each year across the United States, sponsored by the American Lung Association since 1972. Initially a week long campaign the event was lengthened to a month long one in 1994. The month long awareness campaign aims to educate people about the impact that clean air has on our lives and encourages people to take positive steps to improve the air quality – both locally and globally.



Clean Air Month is also an opportunity to celebrate the improvements that have been made over the last four decades since the campaign was launched and the Clean Air Act included into legislation in 1970.



This month you can find out more about how what we do and use effects the air quality and also join in with a range of activities, such as holding ‘Bike to work day ‘ or ‘car share day’. Many activities are led by the American Lung Association and educate as well as involve all members of the community, highlighting ways you can have a beneficial impact on the quality of the air we breathe. More information can be found using this link: <https://www.lung.org/clean-air>

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 \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)
- May 3-5, Hibiscus Festival, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade, for more information contact teresadesguin@yahoo.com
- May 5, PG Half Marathon, Laishley Park, for more information contact drew@eliteevents.org
- May 18, Mental Health Walk, Laishley Park, for more information contact kpomerville@cbhcfl.org
- May 25, Downtown Bash, for more information contact jrwright@puntagorda-chamber.com
- May 27, Memorial Day 5K, Laishley Park, for more information contact acappuccilli@ymcaswfl.org
- **Lot Mowing Program** - The City has completed mowing the following areas on Apr 30
 - 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 (Magdalena Drive, Via Veneto, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive).
 - Burnt Store Isles (Monaco Drive, Tripoli Boulevard, Madrid Boulevard, and Macedonia Drive).
 - Burnt Store Meadows (Areas of Tamiami Trail, N. Blue Sage, S. Blue Sage, Royal Poinciana, and Gold Tree).
 - Downtown and Historic District (W. Marion Avenue, W. Olympia Avenue, Shreve Street, and Harvey Street)
 - The Historic District East of 41 and the area behind Dunkin Donuts (E. Marion Avenue, E Olympia Avenue, Narranja Street, E Henry Street, and Cooper Street).



- **Planning Corner** – On Apr. 24, City staff attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the “Harbor Bridges” mural at Laishley Marina’s boat ramp. The Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society commissioned and installed the murals depicting all four of Punta Gorda’s historic harbor bridges. Next to the murals is a historic plaque from the dedication of the 1931 bridge. After being discarded on the ground and rescued and stored by a local resident, the plaque was restored and mounted next to the murals by the Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society. The new mural is a replacement of the previous one, which stood in severely weatherworn. The replacement mural was designed and painted by artist Kelly Goodson. It was replaced by a new mural designed and painted by artist Kelly Goodson. The information she provided can be found on the Mural society’s webpage, here: [» Harbor Bridges \(puntagordamurals.org\)](http://puntagordamurals.org).



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Public Works

- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Crews filled depressions at 8 locations and fabricated 76 seawall panels due to Hurricane Ian.
- **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. Utilizing plastic during a rain event 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 44 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 148 projects completed, and 17 projects under construction with 30 completed in Burnt Store Isles. [Hurricane Ian Related Seawall Failures | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.puntagorda.fl.us/hurricane-ian-related-seawall-failures)
- **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 \(boat2puntagorda.org\)](https://boat2puntagorda.org) click on the Dock Match button for information.

Engineering

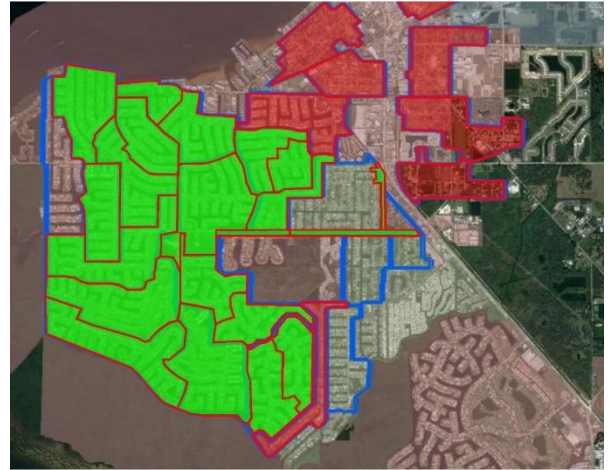
- **Swale Regrading** – The swale contractor has completed Don Quixote Dr., Brazilia Ct., Darin Dr., Padre Island Dr., Casey Key Dr. (SW), and Ussepa Ct. which have been finalized and turned over to the homeowner. The contractor will be watering the sod for the next 30 days weather permitting at Casey Key Dr. (SE) Turtle Dove Cir. and Sea Horse Ct. They have excavated approximately 63,000 SF this fiscal year. The contractor has begun excavating at Sea Fan Dr and will be excavating approximately 3,800 SF. Once the contractor gets the new grades established they will be installing new sod at the proper elevation. The next street to be excavated will be Grebe Dr.

Construction continues at the Interactive Fountain area in Laishley Park. This work includes rehabilitation and upgrades to the splash pad/play area. Seating and enclosure walls were built this week. Please use extra caution while driving or walking through the park due to construction personnel and equipment. To the highest extent possible the restroom facilities will remain open to the public. The access to the restrooms will be from the marina side of the building. There will be periodic temporary sidewalk closures immediately adjacent to the construction area as required for public safety.



The construction area will be closed to the public at all times during this period. The enhanced fountain area is scheduled to reopen in late 2024. 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., Monday thru Friday.

- **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 areas are 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 several weeks. The blue areas are where the installation will be taking place as the project progresses.

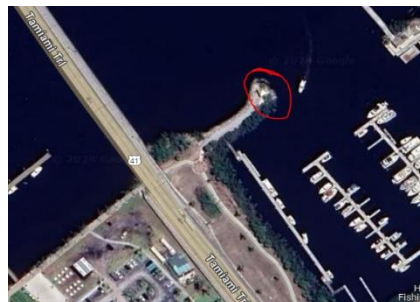


Initially, you will see utility markings within the city right of way, followed by the directional drilling of the fiber optic conduit. Fiber optic boxes will be installed in the right of way or easement at the edge of your property. Once the installation of the underground and service points has been 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

- Parking restriction signs are posted at the entrance of Lashley Park.
- Maintenance of Traffic setup has begun for the ½ - 5K Marathon will start and end at Lashley Park.
- Boat Parking signs have been installed at Lashley Marina.
- Storm drains on the East side of Harborwalk have been cleaned by crews.
- Crews have completed the work on the renovation projects at Pavilion located East of US 41 continues. Crews constructed the rip rap wall to ensure that the area is stable.



Sanitation

- **Residential Yard Waste** – Yard waste debris must be curbside by 6 am on the scheduled yard waste collection day. If you have any questions or to schedule a special pick-up, please contact Public Works (941)575-5050 or [Sanitation | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](http://Sanitation | City of Punta Gorda, FL (punta-gorda.fl.us)).
 - **Cul-de-Sacs** – Residents are not allowed to place yard debris that is generated from their property, vacant lots, or greenbelts on the cul-de-sac for collection. If a resident trimmed the cul-de-sac and vegetation remains, please contact Public Works for collection.
 - **Loose Yard Waste Pile** – Palm fronds, limbs, etc. shall not exceed 4” in diameter or 4’ in length. These items must be tied and bundled for collection; bundles shall weigh no more than 35 pounds.

Shrubbery, grass clippings, and leaves must be placed at the curb in containers. Containers shall not exceed 32 gallons in size or 35 pounds in weight and must have handles. Biodegradable paper bags designated for yard waste collection are allowed.

- **Single Family Residents** - Are allowed no more than three (3) yard waste cans or bags per week. The city does not provide cans for yard waste and residents can purchase a cart from any local hardware store. Please be sure the cart has a lid, wheels, and metal bar across the front.
- **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). The homeowner or company that removes the tree is responsible for hauling away the remains. The City does NOT collect whole tree remains or lot clearing remains.
- **Unacceptable Material** – Lot clearing debris, tree removal, wood, dirt or rocks, cement edging, mulch, sod, fruit, straw, and hay will not be collected by yard waste crews.
- **Vacant Lots** – Vacant lots are not eligible for trash or yard waste services. Please do not place any trash or yard waste on vacant lots. The debris will not be collected.
- **Loose Yard Waste Collection Delays** – Due to the enormous number of requests and limited staff, loose yard waste collection with the clamshell truck might be delayed. If you have a landscaper that maintains the property, please ask them to haul away the debris. Most reputable companies haul away the debris themselves. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Police

- **National Police Week Proclamation** – City Council issued a proclamation recognizing the week of May 12 through May 18 as National Police Week. National Police Week is a time to honor and remember those law enforcement officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

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 April. Applications must be received by May 24. The written exam will be completed online between May 31, and June 7, and virtual oral board exams will be conducted via Zoom on June 18. The department is accepting applications from certified and non-certified candidates.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The police department continually conducts new hire testing to prepare for future openings. Currently, the department is accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. The exam will be held virtually between June 14, and June 21. Applications must be received by June 7.
- **Internship Program** - The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Fall of 2024 and Spring of 2025 semesters. 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.**



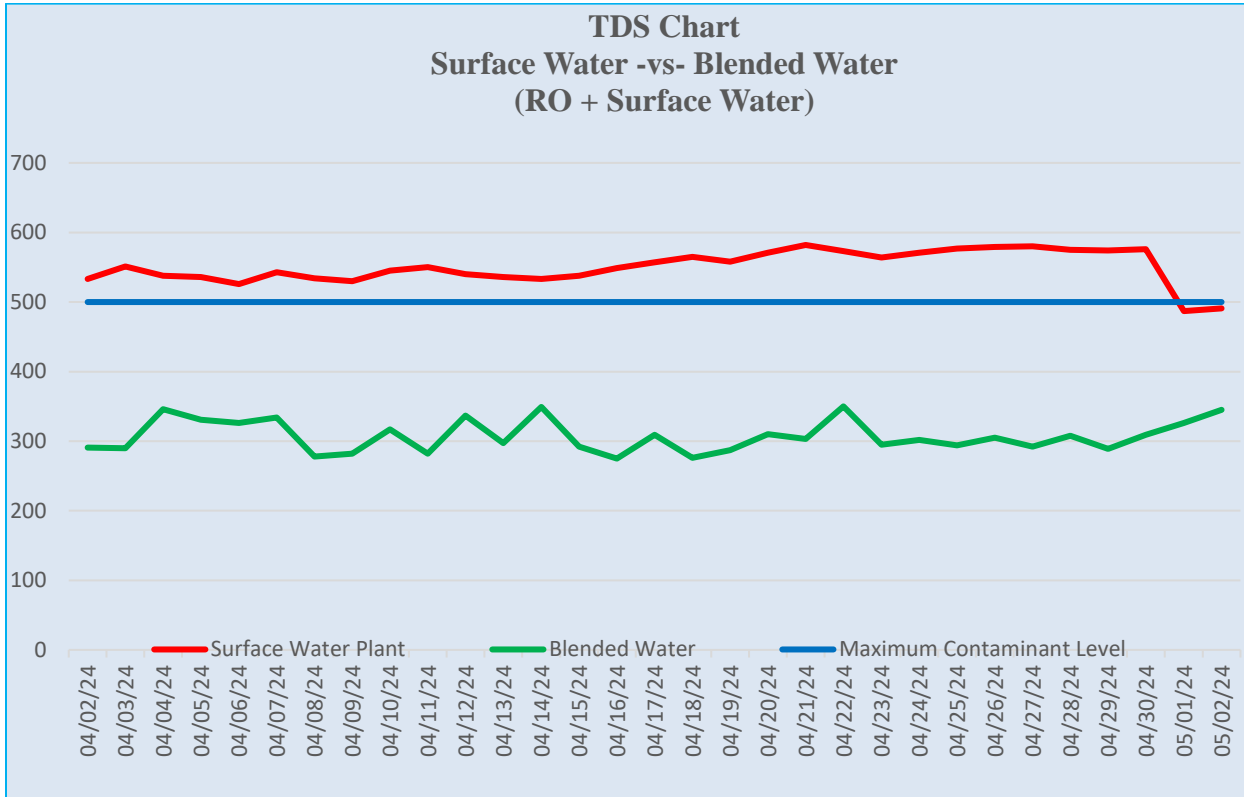
Fire

- **Punta Gorda Fire Department T-1** was first on scene of a mutual aid storage facility fire this past Sunday across from the Marlympia Way Circle K gas station. T-1 and BC-1 arrived on scene to find smoke showing from several units. It was found that two units were on fire and with the wind conditions it appeared several units might have been involved. Crews were able to get a good knockdown and mitigate further exposures with the assistance of CCFEMS.
- **National Day of Prayer** - The fire department and the police department attended a couple events on May 2 for the National Day of Prayer. The first event was held at Shore Point Punta Gorda where the Fire department's Honor Guard team performed a flag raising ceremony and the Fire Chief led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. The second event was held at the City Hall Annex and several local church priests and pastors shared prayers for the city and community as a whole.
- **Bird Rescue** - The fire department received a call about a baby bird that was stuck in a tree. Yes, almost sounds ridiculous but the caller stated the bird was hanging upside down by its foot that was stuck. The administrative team went out and found a baby bird that fell out of its nest most likely, got its foot wrapped up in a piece of palm frond. The fire department was able to utilize a tall A-frame ladder and a long pole to break off the piece of palm frond. The bird was caught and placed in a cardboard box for transport to the Peace River Wildlife Center.
- **National Technical Honor Society** - The fire department would like to recognize and congratulate Firefighter/EMT Caleb Briggs on being recognized by the National Technical Honor Society. Caleb is currently enrolled in the Paramedic program at the Charlotte Technical College. Caleb is nearing completion of the program and will soon be the newest Paramedic serving the residents of Punta Gorda. Congratulations Caleb for a job well done



Utilities

- **RO + 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

- 58.5 MG delivered to the distribution system during the last seven days with a 8.4 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 1350 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 700 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall May. 2023 3.52" May. 2024 – 1.41"
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 9 –Total hardness 152 ppm
- TDS May 2 – Current 345 ppm. Low 260 ppm, High 624 ppm. 14 year average 463 ppm.
- Reservoir May. 18 – Current 5.04', Record Low 4.55', Record High, 5.67'' 58 Year Average 5.06''

City Clerk

2024 Election Cycle

- The seats for Districts 1, 2, and 4 are scheduled for election this year. A general election will take place on Nov. 5, if there are two candidates for one district. A primary election will take place on Aug. 20, if we have three or more candidates for one district. The two candidates receiving the most votes would proceed on to the general election.
- Candidate packets are available for the 2024 election cycle. The packet can be viewed [on the City's website](#). Bound copies are available to interested parties who make an appointment with the City Clerk's Office to review the materials contained in the packet and to complete an acknowledgement of their receipt.
- Filed candidates will be listed on the website upon submission of Form DS-DE 9.
- Did you know your signature can change over the years? Ensure the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections has an up-to-date record of your signature on file for the upcoming election. Stop by their office at 226 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda, Florida, 33982, to update yours during regular business hours.

- In order to vote by mail, you must have a valid request on file with the Supervisor of Elections Office. Requests for vote-by-mail ballots can be made in person, by calling (941)833-5400, or by visiting the [Supervisor of Elections website](#).

- **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** (one consumer advocate and one alternate) – Meets the fourth Tues. at 9 a.m. in Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms – maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two 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** (one alternate) – Meets the fourth Wed. at 9 a.m. in 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.
- **Donation Review Committee** (one historic non-profit representative) – Meets at 10 a.m. in City Council Chambers on the fourth Thurs. of Jan., Apr., July and Oct., or as needed, immediately following the meeting of the Historic Preservation Advisory Board. Charged with review of all non-monetary gift donation proposals/letters of intent received by the City, in accordance with the review process and established criteria identified in the Non-Monetary Donation Policy. Makes recommendations to the City Council for the acceptance or rejection of non-monetary gift donations.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** (two regular and two alternate) – Meets the fourth Thurs. 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 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.
- **Utility Advisory Board** – (two regular) Meets the fourth Mon. at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Seven-member board. Three-year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council with regard to revisions to the utility construction standards, alleged billing discrepancies, and review of utility drawings and specifications.



How did you become involved with volunteering on a City Board?
I bought a boat many years ago and became interested in the work of the Punta Gorda Isles Canal Advisory Committee. I researched the board responsibilities once there was a vacancy, applied as a candidate, and was eventually appointed by the City Council.

What have you enjoyed about your experience as a board member?
Making a difference in the community by contributing to the workings of the City.

What would you say to others considering applying to serve on a board?
Over these past 20 years, I have had the privilege of serving on several different City boards and committees. These experiences have been very rewarding as well as educational from a city-operations standpoint. I encourage others who may be interested in serving our community to investigate the boards on the City website for an opportunity.

Interested in serving on a City board? [Apply on our website.](#)

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:

- PGI Tiki, 1640 Atares Drive