

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

May 17, 2024

City Manager

- National Public Works Week is celebrated this week. In the City of Punta Gorda, the efforts of our Public Works staff are evident. Public Works staff is still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. In the past couple of weeks, the wooden boxes in the downtown that look like Christmas packages were removed. They had covered the broken wayfinding poles. Both the boxes and the poles have been removed and the city is working towards installing new wayfinding signage. If you traveled past the post office after Hurricane Ian you likely noticed the large pile of Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) signage and poles from the hurricane destruction. The Public Works Department contacted FDOT to obtain permission to have city staff load up all of this debris and transport it to the Public Works yard for storage until they complete their replacement project. FDOT ultimately granted this permission, and the signs have been relocated to restore walkability in the downtown. There were also sections of sidewalk on East Olympia that suffered damage from the roots of city trees that fell during Hurricane Ian. FDOT first asked the city to repair these areas and then requested that the repairs be made as a joint project. Due to the delay in the process of a joint project, the city has moved ahead with replacing sidewalks.



On a daily basis, the city Public Works staff has broad responsibilities. The Sanitation/Refuse Collection Division collects refuse and yard waste from approximately 12,150 residential accounts and performs approximately 660 services on commercial accounts. The yard waste is currently hauled to a private operation (SLD Landfill) in Punta Gorda, and the refuse is hauled to Charlotte County Landfill. The city's contractor Waste Management collects the recycling. A 48-gallon cart "single stream" curbside recycling program has been implemented for all residential units.

The Canal Maintenance Division is responsible for the maintenance of seawalls and dredging of canals located within the Burnt Store Isles and Punta Gorda Isles canal districts. Other duties include depression filling, seawall patching, cap patching, cap replacement, maintenance of aids to navigation, inspections, and related tasks.

The Engineering Division is responsible for drainage and stormwater management. They also design, serve as project management, and inspect the construction of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). Infrastructure improvements and maintenance projects are led by Public Works staff. Engineering staff reviews commercial construction projects. Street lighting coordination, traffic signals, signs, and striping coordination are all functions of this division.

The Parks and Grounds Division is responsible for maintaining City parks, municipal grounds, downtown streetscape, street trees, playgrounds, tennis courts, pickle ball courts, city and community entrance features, and medians. Division responsibilities include irrigation design, installation and maintenance, herbicide spraying, fertilizing, cul-de-sac supply deliveries and all related tasks. They maintain 14 public buildings, 110 miles of seawall, 23 parks totaling 130 acres, and nine miles of Pathways (harborwalk, linear park, multi-use recreational trails).

Public Works professionals provide essential services that lead to healthier, happier, more vibrant communities. Thank you to all of our Public Works staff members for all of their efforts 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. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntafordafl.com or call (941) 575-3302.*

- **City Council** – City Council will meet on June 5, at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum.



**Watering Your Lawn?
Know Your Days!**

Did you know there are year-round water restrictions for landscape irrigation to help protect our shared natural resources?

Be in the know on your watering days and times. Visit our Water Restrictions and Conservation page to learn more!

<https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/residents/code-compliance/water-restrictions>

Water 101
Southwest Florida
Water Management District

[Water Restrictions & Conservation | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(\[punta-gorda.fl.us\]\(https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us\)\)](https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/residents/code-compliance/water-restrictions)

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 the following professional position:
 - **Utilities Maintenance Worker III – Water Treatment Plant**
- A skilled laborer position responsible for maintenance and repair of water treatment plant equipment and systems. Perform plumbing repairs, construction and maintenance of treatment facilities and grounds. The City of Punta Gorda has a variety of employment opportunities available learn more at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/.../employment.com>



- **The American Crocodile** – Alligators have inhabited Florida's marshes, swamps, rivers, and lakes for many centuries and are found in all 67 counties. In recent years, Florida has experienced tremendous human population growth. Many residents seek waterfront homes and increasingly participate in water-related activities. This can result in more frequent alligator-human interactions and a greater potential for conflict.

American crocodiles are primarily found in south Florida, living in brackish and saltwater habitats such as ponds, coves, and creeks of mangrove swamps. Recently, crocodiles have moved northward within their range and



even inland into freshwater areas of southeast Florida. The American crocodile is an endangered species success story. Since 1975, their numbers have increased from less than 300 to more than 2,000 adult crocodiles. Today, they are classified as a threatened species. The number of crocodile complaints has risen as a result of their recovery and the increasing number of people living and recreating in south Florida.

- Keep a safe distance if you see an alligator and never feed one. When fed, alligators can lose their natural wariness and instead learn to associate people with the availability of food.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas during daylight hours. Alligators are most active between dusk and dawn.
- Keep pets on a leash and away from the water's edge and never let them swim in fresh or brackish water. Pets often resemble alligators' natural prey.
- Call the FWC's Nuisance Alligator Hotline at 866-FWC-GATOR (866-392-4286) if you believe an alligator poses a threat to people, pets or property and the FWC will dispatch a contracted nuisance alligator trapper to resolve the situation. The FWC places the highest priority on public safety and administers a Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program (SNAP) to proactively address alligator threats in developed areas, while conserving alligators in areas where they naturally occur.

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.charlottecounty-chamber.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 18, Mental Health Walk, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St, for more information contact kpomerville@cbhcf.org
- May 25, Downtown Bash, for more information contact jrwright@puntagorda-chamber.com
- May 27, Memorial Day 5K, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St, for more information contact acappuccilli@ymcaswfl.org

Lot Mowing Program

- The City will begin a new mowing cycle on May 20.
- **Planning Corner** –Within the Special Residential Overlay District (SRO), which includes Punta Gorda Isles, Burnt Store Isles, and Burnt Store Meadows, parking on the grass, front or side yards, is prohibited. All vehicles must be parked properly upon the driveway or in the garage. Chapter 26, Section 3.13, (i). Parking on Developed Property. No vehicle may be parked in the front, side or rear yard of any developed property zoned for residential purposes, except in those areas designated as parking strips, drives or paved areas on the plot plan of the approved building plans and specifications for such property.



The overnight parking of commercial vehicles is prohibited at all residentially zoned properties throughout the City. Chapter 26, Section 8.10 (b) It shall be unlawful for any person, company or corporation to park trucks, recreational vehicles or trailers which have multiple axles (or two rear wheels per side) overnight on public or private property, in other than SP Zoning Districts for which a valid Local Business Tax Receipt has been issued for vehicle storage.

If an alleged violation (parking on the grass or commercial vehicle parking) 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.

Public Works

- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Crews filled depressions at ten locations and fabricated 90 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 24 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 83 projects completed, and ten projects under construction with 17 completed in Burnt Store Isles. [Hurricane Ian Related Seawall Failures | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-orda.fl.us\)](https://www.cityofpuntaorda.fl.us)



- **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.

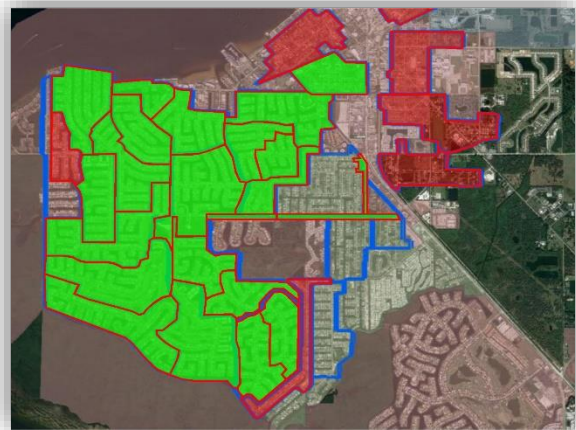
- **Vessel Speeds** – Canal Maintenance is asking people to be mindful of the current situation in the canals with seawalls being damaged. City code states that the operation of vessels in the canals shall be Slow Speed Minimum Wake in the waterways within the City limits. The speed and operation in 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://Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance (boat2puntagorda.org)) click on the Dock Match button for information.

Engineering

- **Laishley Splash Pad** – Construction continues at the Interactive Fountain area in Laishley Park. This work includes rehabilitation and upgrades to the splash pad/play area. The shade structure support columns are being erected, and electrical work is beginning. 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 for 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.



- **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 ways. 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 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 on 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 are removing dead trees on the East side of town on Martin Luther King Jr Blvd and E Charlotte Ave.
- Crews are continuing to repair sidewalks on E Olympia near Booth St.
- Crews have completed the repair to the catch basin at the corner of E Retta Esplanade and Booth St.
- The catch basin on Milus St., next to the Harborwalk is being repaired. This should reduce the build-up of water collecting on E Marion Ave and Milus St.



Sanitation

- **Trash, recycling and yard waste must be placed curbside by 6 a.m. on the day of collection** – Our sanitation workers strive to maintain a routine in which residents would be serviced roughly around the same time each collection day. However, 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 ask residents to have trash, yard waste and recycling curbside either the night before or prior to 6am on the day of service. 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. For more information regarding solid waste [Chapter 10 SOLID WASTE, YARD WASTE, PUBLIC NUISANCES* \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](#)
- **Loose Yard Waste Clamshell Collection Delays** – Due to the enormous amounts 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.
- **Small Loose Yard Waste** – Palm fronds, limbs, and other debris must be cut into four foot sections and tied or bundled for collection. The bundle must not exceed 35 pounds. Staff has brochures that are left for residents that are unaware of the guidelines. If your debris is left with a brochure, please follow the instructions for next yard waste collection. The rules have NOT changed.
- **Yard Waste Containers** – Small loose yard waste, leaves and grass clippings may be placed inside of a container or paper bag. Containers should not exceed 32-gallons in size or weigh more than 35 pounds and must have handles. We would prefer the containers to have a lid, wheels and metal bar across the front to be compatible with the tippers on the trucks. If your yard waste container is not picked up on your regular yard waste day, please check the weight. It is commonly left behind if the crew members are unable to safely lift the container and it exceeds the weight limitations.

Police

- **Police Week 2024** - In 1962, President Kennedy proclaimed May 15, as National Peace Officers Memorial Day and the calendar week in which May 15, falls, as National Police Week. Established by a joint resolution of Congress in 1962, National Police Week pays special recognition to law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and protection of others. On May 1, the Punta Gorda City Council proclaimed May 12 - May 18, as Police Week in Punta Gorda. While Police Week is primarily meant to be a time to honor those officers who made the ultimate sacrifice with memorial services, we also realize that many people take this opportunity to show their support for law enforcement. Citizens often bring treats and notes of appreciation for the officers. This year, Congressman Greg Steube's office sent several boxes of donuts to the police department to show his support.



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 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

- **Fire Rescue Training** – This week fire department crews participated in a multi-jurisdictional training module with Charlotte County Fire Rescue training on search and rescue techniques in a large commercial structure. Crews used an old Sears at the Murdock Mall to conduct the training. They used ropes, thermal imaging cameras, and additional equipment to set up search grids to find victims who had been overcome by smoke in these large open buildings.



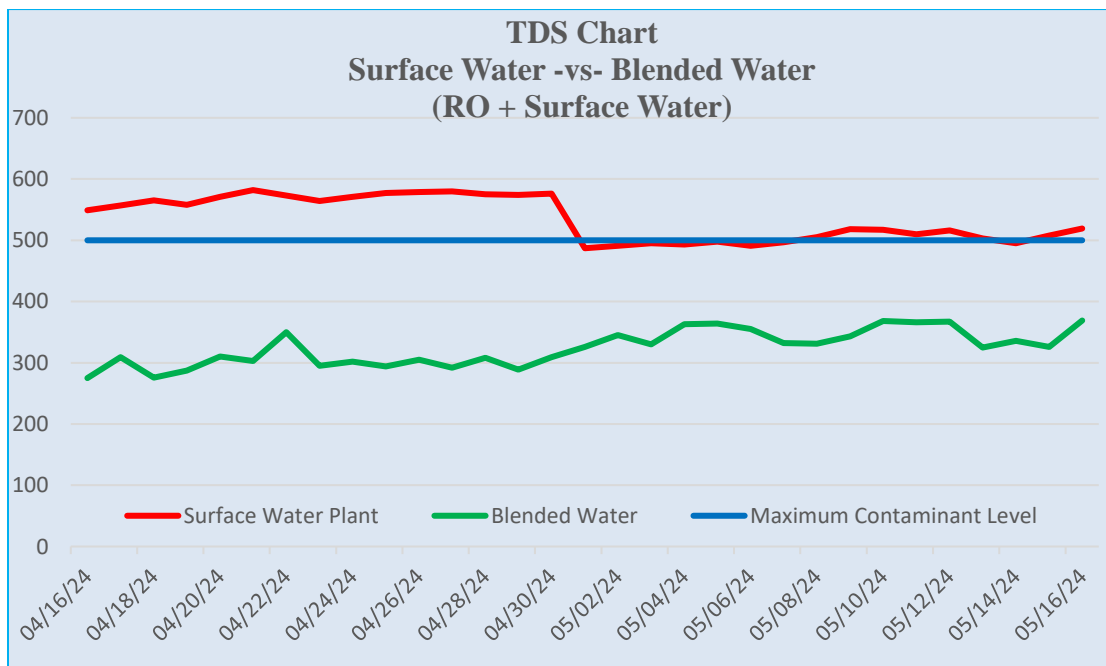
Crews also had to overcome communication and equipment issues that departments from different entities have to deal with. Departments that share common neighborhoods must train regularly.

We were also able to send three of our future leaders to a week-long Fire Officer Development Academy hosted by Charlotte County Fire Rescue. Firefighters Rhett Anderson, CW McLeod, and Kyle Raymond volunteered to put themselves through this rigorous program to prepare themselves for future advancement within the ranks. They also were treated to many guest speakers within the County government to give them a better understanding of the inner workings of the department and County government. This invaluable experience will serve them well when they are called upon in the future to lead.



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**
- 61.0 MG delivered to the distribution system during the last seven days with 8.7 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 – 1.71"
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water.

- Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 9 –Total hardness 160 ppm
- TDS May 16 – Current 343 ppm. Low – 304 ppm, High 602 ppm, 14-year average 471 ppm.
- Reservoir May 16 – Current 4.92', Record Low 4.56', Record High, 5.39' 58 Year Average 5.06'

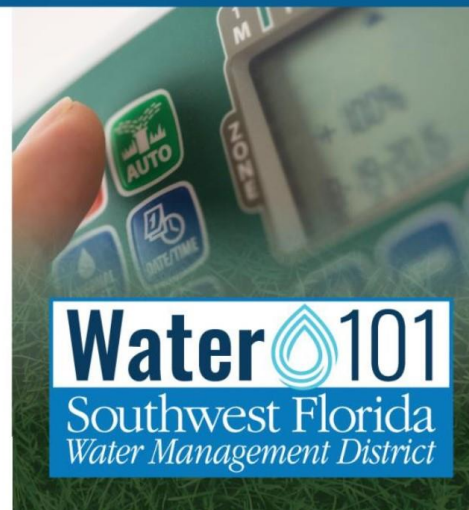
Lawn Watering

- Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
- Hand watering and micro-irrigation of plants (other than lawns) can be done on any day and at any time using a shut-off nozzle on their hose, so water isn't wasted.

Irrigation Basics

Save water and money by making sure your irrigation controller is set to water wisely. Check local watering restrictions for irrigation start times and watering days.

- ▶ **Irrigation Start Time:** Only one start time is needed to initiate watering for all irrigation zones. Set a start time before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.
- ▶ **Irrigation Run Time:** This is how long each zone in your irrigation system will run. Check with your local UF/IFAS Extension office for run time recommendations.
- ▶ **Irrigation Schedule:** Your system should be scheduled to only water on your designated watering days and only if needed.
- ▶ **For more info visit:** <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/residents/code-compliance/water-restrictions>



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, one contractor, 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.
- **Burnt Store Isles Canal Advisory Committee** (one regular) – Meets the second Tues., at 1:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be resident of Burnt Store Isles. Five-member board. Three-year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council on effective maintenance of existing canals, waterways and navigable channels within the district, together with the maintenance and reconstruction of seawalls. Holds public hearings and makes final decision on petitions for special permit to the provisions of Section 6-6(c) of the City Code of Ordinances.
- **Code Enforcement Board** (three regular and 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 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.
- **Planning Commission** (one regular) – Meets the fourth Mon., 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.
- **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.

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:

- Kahala Vacation Rental, 2201 West Marion Avenue.