

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

June 14, 2024

City Manager

- Last week, a delegation of city staff members attended the Florida Planning and Zoning Association's Annual Conference at Sunseeker Resort. Staff members learned about a variety of best practices for planning. Some of the key topics included: policy tools for placemaking, resiliency planning and implementation, building resilient communities, green infrastructure and low-impact development and transforming communities through collaboration. The event culminated with Awards Luncheon.

The City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan 2045 was honored with the prestigious Outstanding Plan Award by the FPZA during the 2024 Annual Conference. This accolade underscores the years of dedicated community engagement, meticulous integration of community values, adoption of best planning practices, and innovative solutions to citywide challenges that have been meticulously woven into the fabric of the plan's update.

The Comprehensive Plan 2045 represents a monumental effort, encompassing nearly a complete overhaul of crucial elements such as Future Land Use, Coastal Management, Transportation, Housing, and Historic Preservation. These revisions were meticulously crafted to align with the aspirations outlined in the 2019 Citywide Master Plan, which underscores the community's commitment to resilience, environmental preservation, and downtown revitalization, retention of its small-town urban character, historic conservation, and promotion of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, fostering economic growth, and embracing sustainability initiatives.

This groundbreaking plan is the culmination of a comprehensive five-year planning endeavor undertaken by the City of Punta Gorda, incorporating insights from pivotal studies including the 2019 Citywide Master Plan, the 2019 Climate Adaptation Plan Update, the 2019 Budgetary and Fiscal Analysis, and the 2019 Transportation Buildout Study. The public engagement for just the Master Plan included hearing from over 500 participants during the hands-on sessions, 200 visitors during the Gilchrist Park open house, held 30 interviews and technical meetings, met over 120 visitors during the open design studio, and had over 1,000 hands-on touch points on printouts and maps. These diverse perspectives and recommendations have been meticulously synthesized into the Comprehensive Plan 2045, serving as a blueprint to inform future decisions and guide the city towards a prosperous and sustainable future.



At the heart of this update was the overarching objective to address critical issues such as budgetary constraints, sustainable development, resilience to climate change, and housing affordability. To this end, the Comprehensive Plan 2045 advocates for the adoption of a form-based code alongside other Smart Growth policies, paving the way for a more cohesive and resilient urban landscape.

The recognition bestowed upon the City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan 2045 by the FPZA is a testament to its exemplary standards and innovative approaches in urban planning. This prestigious award not only honors the diligent efforts of the community, elected officials, staff, and consultants involved in its creation but also positions the Plan as a beacon of excellence for municipalities across Florida embarking on similar comprehensive planning endeavors. The City of Punta Gorda is deeply honored by this distinction and remains committed to upholding the highest standards of urban planning excellence in the years to come.

We are fortunate to have many people, organizations and leaders committed 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. *For further inquiries, contact City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or call the main office at (941) 575-3302.*

- **Strategic & Budget Planning** – Community conversation engage, connect and discuss on June 17, at 4:30 p.m. at the Punta Gorda Library.



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:
 - **Utility Engineer – Utilities.** A professional position responsible for Utilities Engineering and providing technical engineering services for City utilities construction and improvement projects.
 - **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.
 - **Senior Accountant – Finance** - A professional position responsible for applying the principles of accounting to analyze financial information and prepare financial reports by compiling information, preparing profit and loss statements, and utilizing appropriate accounting control procedures.
 - **Maintenance Worker II – Canal Maintenance – Public Works** – A skilled laborer position responsible for the maintenance and repair or replacement of seawalls and related structures within the P.G.I. and B.S.I. canal maintenance districts. The City of Punta Gorda has a variety of employment opportunities available learn more at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/.../employment.com>



Safety Minute

- **Play it smart, play it safe** – Whether driving or walking, any time you come to a flooded road, **TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN!**
 - Monitor the NOAA Weather Radio, or your favorite news source for vital weather related information.
 - Avoid areas already flooded, especially if the water is flowing fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams. Turn Around Don't Drown
 - Road beds may be washed out under flood waters. Never drive through flooded roadways - you do not know the condition of the road under the water. Turn Around Don't Drown
 - Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
 - Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
 - Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.
 - A foot of water will float many vehicles.
 - Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles (SUV's) and pick-ups. Use caution when dealing with flood waters. Flood waters may contain snakes and insects; sharp objects and debris; and oil, gasoline, industrial waste, or raw sewage.



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 \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)

- **The Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce Poker Walk** – As we gear up for another exciting Poker Walk event on June 20, we wanted to extend an invitation for your business to join in for next month's Poker Walk happening on July 18. The Poker Walk on July 18 promises to be another fantastic opportunity for downtown businesses to showcase their offerings while supporting a worthy cause. We already have commitments from esteemed establishments such as Pomegranate & Fig, Illusions, and PG Chocolate and Wine, and we're now seeking an additional five businesses to complete the lineup.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- July 18, between 4 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- Drive businesses to the downtown area and support the Peace River Wildlife Center, our chosen Non-Profit recipient for July;
- Guests will tour participating businesses, make purchases, and contribute donations;
- Each guest will draw a card from a card deck provided by the chamber at each location, aiming to assemble the best poker hand. One location will serve as a wild card stop, allowing participants to exchange one card for a redraw. The evening will culminate in a final gathering (*location TBD*) at 7:30 p.m. to determine the Poker Walk winners.

This is an excellent opportunity for your business to engage with the community, attract potential customers, and contribute to a meaningful cause. *If you're interested in participating or would like more information, please email brett@illusionsofpg.com or call 941-505-5777 (office) or 941-626-3560 (cell).* Thank you for considering this opportunity to be a part of our vibrant downtown community and support a valuable cause

- [June 29, Freedom Festival, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit Street, for more information contact jerryeffi001@gmail.com](mailto:jerryeffi001@gmail.com)
- **Lot Mowing Program** – The City will begin a new mowing cycle on June 17, weather permitting.
- **Planning Corner** – The mission statement of the City of Punta Gorda is “to preserve and enhance Punta Gorda’s identity as a vibrant waterfront community, unique in character and history; as a desirable place to live, work, and visit”. Historic structures in downtown and surrounding neighborhoods form the basis of Punta Gorda’s visual identity. They are some of our most important physical landmarks and serve as tangible representations of small town charm. It is a long-standing goal of the City to become one of Florida’s premier historic waterfront communities. Historic districts and structures, in addition shaping the town’s character, are revenue drivers and part of the city’s economic development. To enhance historic preservation efforts, the City’s Land Development Regulations call for the adoption of a Local Register of Historic Places (or “Local Register”, for short). This Local Register lists all structures that have historic value and contribute the character of Punta Gorda through their architectural features. Properties listed on the Local Register are subject to historic preservation guidelines. For example, a local historic structure can have a demolition permit withheld for 18 months. This is to discourage a developer from buying a block of historic homes and razing them to make way for new development. If a historic structure is demolished that was contributing to a historic district, the new structure that replaces it



will be subject to review by the Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB) before a building permit is issued. Their review will ensure that the new construction is architecturally consistent in proportion and treatment with the surrounding historic neighborhood. The benefit of a historic designation is that designated properties under the Florida Building Code receive relief from certain mandatory standards, including the FEMA 50% rule.

Public Works

- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Crews filled depressions at 26 locations and removed a navigation hazard. Crews manufactured 90 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. 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 18 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 93 projects completed, and five projects under construction with 20 completed in Burnt Store Isles. [Hurricane Ian Related Seawall Failures | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](#)
- **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 \(boat2puntagorda.org\)](#) 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), Ussepa Ct., and Casey Key Dr. (SE) Turtle Dove Cir 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 Sea Horse Ct., Sea Fan Dr., and Grebe Dr. The contractor has begun to excavate Orange St., W. McKenzie St., Lemon St., and McGregor St. this week, and will be excavating approximately 12,000 SF. Once they have the grades established, new sod will be installed. The swale contractor has excavated approximately 73,000 SF this fiscal year.

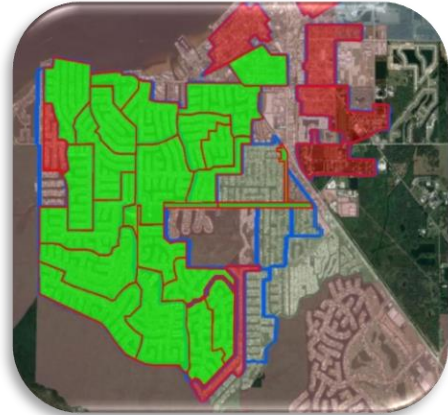


- **Laisley Splash Pad** – Construction continues at the Interactive Fountain area in Laisley Park. This work includes rehabilitation and upgrades to the splash pad/play area. The shade structure support columns are being erected, and electrical work is beginning. Please use extra caution while driving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



- **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 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 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 have finished the catch basin at Magdalena St., across from Freeport.
- Storm Drain and Cath Basin cleaning/maintenance work has been completed in the Whippoorwill Blvd area.
- Sidearm mowing on Cooper St., near the high school has been completed.

Sanitation

- **Loose Yard Waste** – Residents can request the special pick-up by calling the Public Works Department (941) 575-5050 or completing the online web request <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/sanitation>. Staff will review the request and the qualifying request will be done in the order in which they are received. Below are some basic guidelines to follow.
 - The yard waste must be at least one cubic yard (3'x3'x3') or approximately two 96-gallon trash cans
 - If the pile exceeds five Cubic yards (5'x5'x5') the resident will be required to have the debris removed by a private hauler
 - Vacant lots do not pay for refuse or yard waste services, therefore, they are not eligible for clamshell truck collection
 - Whole tree removals and lot clearing are not included in the regular yard waste service, the owner or contractor is responsible for the clean-up and removal of debris. Please do not place piles near or under power lines or trees, utility boxes, mailboxes, fire hydrants, etc.

Police

- **2024 Public Safety Summer Youth Academy** - The rain didn't wash out the fun at this year's Public Safety Youth Academy. The kids got outside when possible, but they also had a great time inside learning about careers in public safety from the police officers and firefighters. The camp was held this week from June 10 – June 14, and was open to kids from 10 to 14 years of age.

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 July 12. The written exam will be completed online between July 19, and July 26, and virtual oral board exams will be conducted via Zoom on August 6. 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 July 12, and July 19. Applications must be received by July 5.



- **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

- **Swimming Safety** – Whether it’s a trip to the beach or a dip in the community or backyard pool, these swimming safety tips can help you have fun in the sun.

Hard Facts about Drowning

- Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death among children ages 1-4.
- And it's the third leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children 19 and under.
- In 2018, 918 children under the age of 19 drowned and more than 7,000 were seen in the emergency room.

Top Tips for Swimming Safety

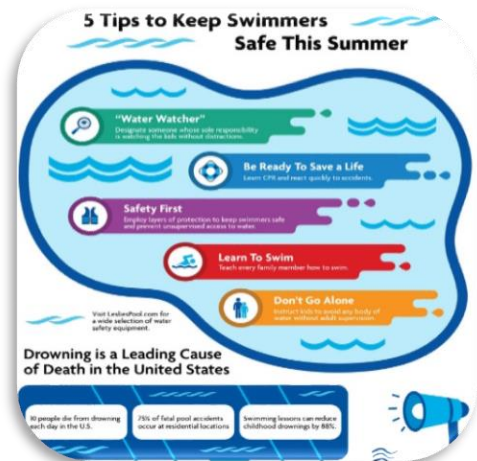
- Watch kids when they are in or around water. Keep young children and weak swimmers within arm’s reach of an adult. Make sure more experienced swimmers are with a partner every time.
- **Choose a Water Watcher-** When there are several adults present, choose one to be responsible for watching children in or near the water for a certain period of time, such as 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, select another adult to be the Water Watcher.

Teach children how to swim.

- Every child is different, so enroll children in swim lessons when they are ready. Consider their age, development and how often they are around water.

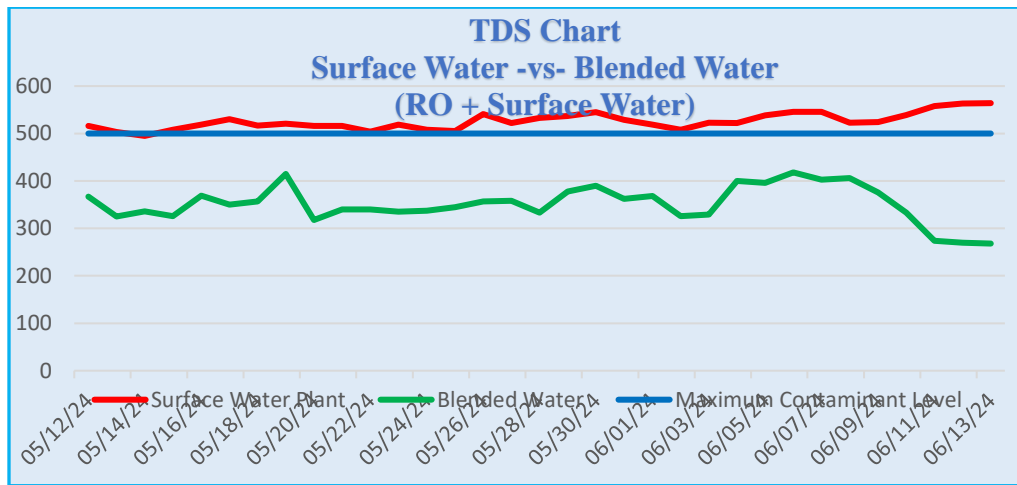
Make sure kids learn these five water survival skills.

- Step or jump into water over their head and return to the surface.
- Turn around in the water and orient to safety.
- Float or tread water.



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**
- **46.9 MG** delivered to the distribution system during the last seven days with **6.7 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 June 2023 – 5.55” June 2024 – 4.39”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 8 –Total hardness 140 ppm
- TDS June 13 – Current 268 ppm. Low – 252 ppm, High 637 ppm, 14-year average 425 ppm.
- Reservoir June 13 – Current 5.31', Record Low 4.20', Record High, 7.01' 58 Year Average 5.33'

Lawn Watering

- **Phase I Water Shortage** – The Southwest Florida Water Management District's (District) Governing Board declared a [Phase I Water Shortage](#) for the District's central and southern regions, which include Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota counties. The primary purpose for a Phase I water shortage is to alert the public that watering restrictions could be forthcoming. The order also requires local utilities to review and implement procedures for enforcing year-round water conservation measures and water shortage restrictions, including reporting enforcement

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>

Water 101
Southwest Florida
Water Management District

activity to the District. A Phase I water shortage order does not change allowable watering schedules, however it does prohibit "wasteful and unnecessary" water use. [Water Restrictions | City of Punta Gorda, FL](#)

- **Lawn Watering Schedule/Times** – Lawn watering is limited to twice per week (if needed) by property address. 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.

Lawn Watering Schedule Table

Addresses	Current Watering Day	May Also Water
Ending in 0 and 1	Monday	Thursday
Ending in 2 and 3	Tuesday	Friday
Ending in 4 and 5	Wednesday	Saturday
Ending in 6 and 7	Thursday	Sunday
Ending in 8 and 9	Friday	Tuesday
Addresses that end with a letter instead of a number will water on:	Friday	Tuesday

City Clerk

2024 Election Cycle 2024 Election Cycle

- The seats for Districts 1, 2, and 4 are scheduled for election this year. A general election will take place on November 5, as two candidates qualified for each district. Qualified candidates are listed on the [City's website](#).
- The qualifying period wherein candidates collect signatures in their petition packets began at noon on June 10, and will end at noon on June 14. At the end of the qualifying period, the candidates who have obtained the requisite number of verified signatures will be announced on the [City's website](#).
- 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.

- **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 Thursday of Jan., April, 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**
 - General Roofing Solutions, 2136 Wyatt Circle
 - PS Salon and Spa, 2001 Aqui Esta Drive
 - Helgemo Vacation Rental, 227 Shreve Street, Unit A
 - Helgemo Vacation Rental, 227 Shreve Street, Unit B
 - Hodak Vacation Rental, 918 Messina Drive
 - Molly Malovey’s Storage LLC Vacation Rental, 120 Great Isaac Court