



Florida's Harborside Hometown

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT MARCH 20, 2020

City Manager

COVID 19 LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY

The COVID-19 response and preparedness have dominated the work of the City of Punta Gorda staff over the past few weeks. To make it easier for residents to get the information they need about the impact of the virus in our community, City staff has developed a web page that provides information about the response from all levels of government in one easy to access place <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/i-want-to/advanced-components/covid-19-microsite>. Additionally, the Charlotte County Community Organizations Active in a Disaster (COAD) has created a point of entry to assist residents with the economic hardships they may experience as a result of COVID-19. Visit www.coadfl.org or call 211 for more information. If you are interested in a philanthropic investment in COAD please visit <https://charlottecf.org/donate/>.

On the morning of Mar. 23 the following closures will be enacted in the City of Punta Gorda, the Gilchrist Park Playground, Bailey Brothers Park Playground and Exercise Equipment, Cooper Street Recreation facilities, Gilchrist Pickleball Courts, Gilchrist Park Tennis and Basketball Courts, Ponce Park Playground, Linear Park Outdoor Exercise Equipment and the Hounds on Henry Dog Park. As previously noticed the Laishley Park Interactive Fountain will also remain closed. Fishing piers, boat ramps, benches and picnic pavilions that are outside of locked areas are open for use, but social distancing measures need to be practiced and no groups larger than 10 will be allowed to gather. The Punta Gorda Pathways and Harborwalk are open with the same social distancing necessity.

City Council declared a State of Emergency on Mar. 18. This gives City Administration the authority to make decisions, standard procurement policies are replaced by the Emergency Procurement Policy and allows the City to be potentially eligible for Federal or State aid should it become available. That afternoon the City Manager convened a group of restaurant owners and managers from the City of Punta Gorda to share best practices and assist with compliance with the Governor's Order 20-68. Additional information from the Department of Business & Professional Regulation was shared with the group via email and Facebook. It is posted on the City's website at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showdocument?id=10925>. As of the afternoon of Mar. 20 a new order was issued further limiting restaurants and other businesses. Restaurants are limited to delivery and takeout food and alcohol sales. It is posted at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showdocument?id=10927>.

On Mar. 13 the City Manager convened representatives of many of the major events and festivals that has resulted in the decision to postpone and or cancel the following events; TEAM Punta Gorda Pedal & Play, City Wide Garage Sale, the Punta Gorda Block Party and Old Timers Luncheon, Hibiscus Festival, Welcome Home Vietnam Vets Event and Parade, Sullivan Street Arts and Crafts Festival, The Ladies Social Network Arts & Craft Show, Peace River National Art Show, and the Charlotte County Relay for Life. Several events are also being postponed or modified at the Charlotte Harbor Events Center. The History Park and Downtown Farmers Market were also suspended until further notice.

It has been mentioned many times over the course of the week that we are in uncharted waters. Our community knows how and is ready to prepare for hurricanes but this particular public health emergency does not come with a cone of uncertainty that guides our actions. Information on this situation changes on an hourly basis and your City administration is responding and preparing in a variety of ways to protect the health and welfare of our residents and ensure continuity of government. This is a fluid situation and additional measures may be necessary in the future. A brief list of actions each department is undertaking is listed below:

The City Clerk's Office

- Advisory Board Meetings cancelled until further notice - members and staff notified, agendas removed from website and calendars adjusted.
- Wiping down all surfaces in City Hall each morning and in Council Chambers following every meeting.
- Posted notices on exterior City Hall doors not to enter if virus symptoms.

Information Technology (IT)

- Prepared additional virtual desktops in preparation for an increase in employees working from home. Assisting Human Resources (HR) in establishment of telecommuting policies.

Punta Gorda Fire Department

- Each Employee has participated in at least 2 trainings with Medical Director Dr. O'Leary
- COVID-19 and infectious disease education for all employees
- Attended Department of Health meetings with Dr. Pepe
- Proper donning and doffing of CDC recommended PPE
- Prepared "COVID Kits" which include Mask, Gown, Goggles, Gloves and a mask for patients to reduce possible droplet transmission to EMS personnel
- Spoke with all local ALF's and nursing homes about response changes
- Implemented cleaning/disinfecting of stations 3x daily
- Cleaning/disinfecting of apparatus and medical equipment after suspected calls
- Monitor the CDC website daily for new updates
- Dispatch screening 911 calls for possible COVID-19 or flu like cases
- Daily phone conference calls with the EOC
- Beginning to implement employee screening before start of each shift
- Fire Department reached out to faith-based organizations and coordinated several meetings to exchange ideas between the various groups. The meetings were well attended and appreciated.
- Public education posters reflected several best practices for personal hygiene were posted through-out public buildings including City parks.
- We continue to monitor the situation through the CDC website and through updates from the Department of Health. We will continue cleaning and disinfecting as well as proper hand washing multiple times a day.

Punta Gorda Police Department

- Community services such as VIN checks, child seat installation and form verifications are suspended until further notice.
- All police volunteer program services have been suspended.
- Fingerprinting services for the public have been discontinued.
- Memorandum sent out to all personnel regarding best practices.

- Review of Exposure Control policy conducted with all personnel.
- All non-essential internal and external training postponed.
- All larger group meetings involving personnel cancelled or handled via teleconference.
- Do the Right Thing of Charlotte County program suspended for remainder of school year.
- Available School Resource Officers and Community Engagement Unit officers currently assigned to supplement patrol and assist in emergency preparations.
- Supplies inventoried and being restocked as possible.
- Upcoming new hire testing postponed.
- Identifying possible staff child care needs should daycare centers close.
- Arrangements being made should certain employees need to work remotely or work staggered schedules.
- Low priority calls for service being handled via phone when feasible.
- Officers responding to non-emergency calls requesting to speak with callers outdoors when feasible.
- Arrangements being made to address the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.
- Planning being done to address potential future staffing issues. A FAQ sheet from the Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation was solicited to assist restaurant and bar owners with understanding the Governor's Executive Order 20-68 view the page at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showdocument?id=10925>.

Finance Billing & Collections

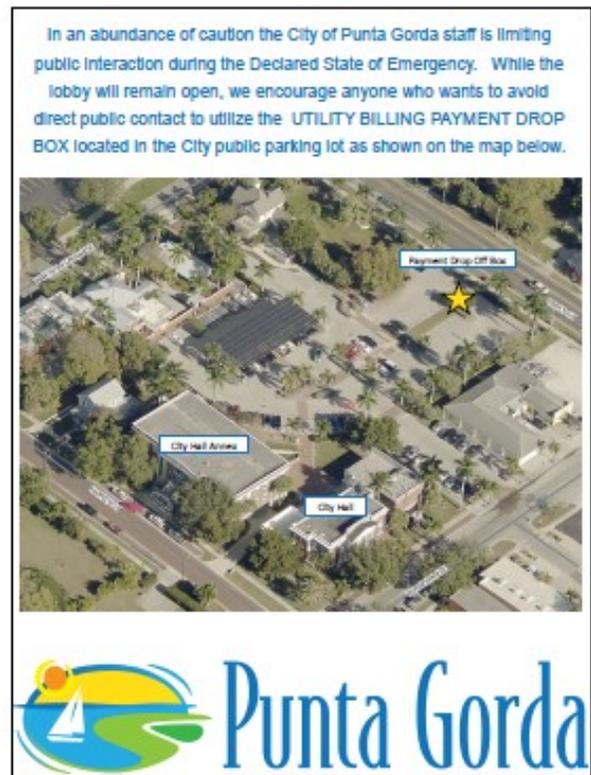
- As of Mar. 17, water shutoffs suspended and penalties waived on overdue payments. Meter readings and billings continue as normal. To reduce in-person transactions, we are encouraging the use of one-time electronic payment at www.cityofpuntagordafl.com and choosing Make a Payment, a customer's own on-line banking, payment by phone 941-639-2528 to be transferred to the automated system (option 1), or the drop box in the City Hall parking lot. For future payments by bank draft, please email pgcollections@cityofpuntagordafl.com to obtain a bank draft form.

Procurement

- Holding all required public openings or meetings in a larger room environment with proper social distancing measures.

Finance

- Following federal guidelines and documentation requirements to qualify for any federal funding that may be applicable to the City of Punta Gorda.
- Briefed department heads on proper procedures for tracking expenses under the State of Emergency



Urban Design/Zoning/Code Compliance

- Cancelled Design Studio until further notice
- Limit contact in the field while still adhering to advised social distancing
- Limit contact with visitors to the office to maintain advised social distancing
- Contact complainants and respondents via phone and/or email
- Review plans and applications as submitted
- Cancelled park rentals of 10 or more until further notice and processed refund requests

Public Works:

- All Public Works Divisions are following the Centers for Disease Control recommendations regarding contact with the public or other workers.

Utilities Department Covid 19 Response:

- All Utilities Divisions are following the Centers for Disease Control recommendations regarding contact with the public or other workers.
- Citizen tours of the treatment plants are suspended until further notice.

Human Resources

- Notify employees of changes from Blue Cross such as \$0 cost for COV19 testing, and filling prescriptions early.
- Notify employees of webinars available for them to attend to learn about the virus, stopping the spread, etc.
- Notify employees of changes by Nationwide to go virtual instead of face to face meetings with reps.
- Investigate testing process for virus and where to go to get tested.
- Send reminders of Teladoc and how their physicians are available to answer questions.
- Make sure employees remember hand washing, disinfecting, social distancing, do not touch your face.
- Notify employees of extreme blood shortage due to virus and call to donate.
- Draft modified Declared State of Emergency Policy;
- Update to employees regarding major policy changes;
- Review provisions of FCCRA legislation, summarize;
- Provide each department head of their employees' sick leave balances;
- Answered many employee questions.

Regular Weekly Updates March 20, 2020

Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed mowing the following areas:
Burnt Store Meadows (Areas of Tamiami Tr., N. Blue Sage, S. Blue Sage, Royal Poinciana, and Gold Tree). East Side and the area behind Dunkin Donuts (E. Marion Ave, E Olympia Ave, Narranja St, E Henry St, and Cooper St).

Code Compliance

- City Council suspended enforcement of signs in the right of way on residential properties until a revised sign ordinance can be reviewed and public hearings held. Code restrictions on commercial properties will still be enforced.

Public Works

Parks & Grounds

- **Interactive Fountain** – the Interactive Fountain at Laishley Park is closed due to the COVID-19 virus.

Engineering

- **Veterans Park Phase II** - The contractor has completed all railing work at the gazebo. Pavement markings on the recently resurfaced intersection of Nesbit St. and E. Retta Esplanade are scheduled for Mar. 26. Contractor continues their work on punch list repairs.



- **ADA Interior Signage and Wayfinding** - The signs for the Public Works and Utilities Campus are being manufactured. Installation is anticipated to commence the beginning of Mar. and complete by mid-May.
- **Alligator Creek pedestrian bridge along US 41 NB-FDOT Right of Way** - The pedestrian bridge is open for public use.
- **Boca Grande Drainage Improvements** - Properties are currently in the acquisition phase for pond usage which will determine design completion.
- **City wide Drainage Swale regrading** - To date JRL Underground has completed work at 684 properties totaling 510,200 square feet of grading/sodding. Work completed during the week of Mar. 16 included excavation and grading along both sides of Trieste Dr. Work is underway along Candia Ct. and will then move to Toulouse Dr.
- **Harborwalk (Gilchrist Gazebo to Berry)** – City Council awarded agreement to Pavement Maintenance, LLC. Construction projected to take six months after notice to proceed.
- **Madrid Sidewalk Construction** - Concrete sidewalk, pipe, basin installations, curb and grade work continues. The work area is from the western drive of the Burnt Store Publix Plaza to US 41 SB. This project is scheduled to complete by the end of May 2020. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager, Public Works Department at (941) 575-5060 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- **Sullivan Street renovation** - The Pre-submittal Conference is scheduled Mar. 26 with site visit to follow. A second site visit is scheduled on Mar. 31.

Canal Maintenance

- **Bonefish Bayou Dredging** – Dredging has begun on the Bonefish Bayou. This canal is located between Ocean Dr. and Palm Tree Dr. Construction is expected to be completed by Mar. 31. For additional information on this project, please contact Canal Maintenance Supervisor, Cathy Miller, Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 between the business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- **Berms** - Rain water run off discharged into the canal has a tendency to erode the berm away from the foot of the seawall. Berms help support the bottom of the seawall panels. Canal Maintenance crews recently inspected all drainage outfall pipes at seawalls and found only a few locations needing restoration.

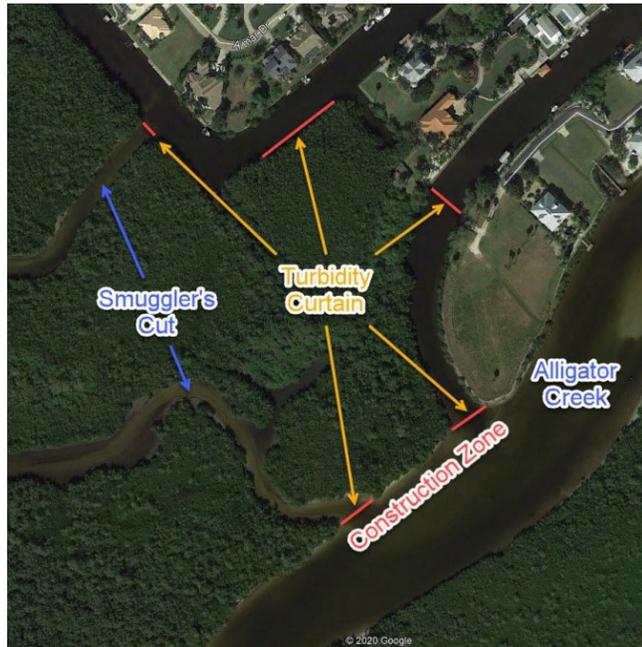


- **Mangrove Trimming** – Annual mangrove trimming has begun. Sancho Panza and Barge canal is completed. The contractor is currently working on the perimeter canal.
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** - The seawall replacement contractor has completed nine seawall replacement projects. There are three projects under construction in PGI and two under construction in BSI. There is 1 completed seawall replacement project in BSI. A seawall replacement project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
 - Crews filled depressions at 26 locations.
 - Crews performed nine seawall cap and seam patches (52' linear ft.).
 - Crews replaced storm one berm.
 - Crews performed one cap inspection.
 - Crews made repairs to Ponce De Leon boat ramp.

- **Buckley's Pass** - Please visit the City's YouTube channel to view drone footage taken of the construction progress. Check out the very popular playlist by visiting:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLn0c8jp5fQiW4fNFEdownKc85_W-fSqI5.

The dredging of Alligator Creek is ongoing. Boaters NEED to stay out of the new pass until construction is completed which is scheduled to occur in April. DO NOT open the turbidity curtains to gain access through the pass. Damage to vessel propulsion systems is very likely to occur if they enter the pass. The canals between Almar Drive and River Bay Drive and Sea Edge Drive may be closed to through traffic during construction operations.



Boaters should use caution when operating near the construction area. Trucking of dredge spoils from Casey Key Drive to the Colony Point Drive spoil site continues. Residents NEED to stay out of the Colony Point Drive spoil site and off of the spoil piles. Heavy equipment is being used in the area and injury is likely to occur. Smuggler's Cut a.k.a. Poacher's Cut, will be closed to through traffic during construction until Mar. 27. The dredging operation is blocking access through Smuggler's Cut where it intersects Alligator Creek. Both ends of the Cut are closed off with turbidity curtains to keep boaters from getting to a dead-end with no room to turn around. The curtains will be opened at the end of each work day until operations start the next morning and during the weekend allow traffic through.

Utilities Department

Utilities Administration

- The resampling for Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) has been conducted at 601 Shreve Street. A table of the resample values is on the City's web-page under the Utilities Department. All resample values at this sample site as well as throughout the water system were below the 80 ug/L drinking water standard.

Groundwater R.O. Construction Update



Week 89 – Data system being started and tested.

Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 43.6 MG of water was delivered to the distribution system with a 6.2 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving water at a rate of .5 million gallons per day, started Sept. 30.
- Rainfall in Mar. 2019 1.70”, Mar. 2020 0.00”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “very hard” – Grains of Hardness 17 ppm – Total hardness 290 ppm
- TDS for Mar. 19 – Current 529 ppm, Low 384 ppm, High 659 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 509 ppm
- Reservoir Mar. 19 – Current 5.05’, Record Low 4.89’, Record High 6.25’, 55 Year Avg. 5.24’

City Clerk

Current Board & Committee Vacancies ([Volunteer Appointment Information Form](#))

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** (One alternate vacancy) – Meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms with a maximum of three terms. Financial disclosure required. Makes recommendations to City Council on variances to City Code.
- **Utility Advisory Board** – (One vacancy) meets the fourth Monday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven-member board. Three-year terms – maximum of two terms. Makes recommendations to City Council regarding, but not limited to, revisions to the utility construction standards, alleged billing discrepancies and review of utility drawings and specifications.
- **Building Board** – (One vacancy consumer advocate) Meets the fourth Tuesday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers – City residency not required. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Four members must be involved with the building industry and three members must be consumer advocates who are not, nor ever have been, involved with building industry. Makes recommendations to City Council on the minimum qualifying requirements for obtaining Certificates of Competency in the various construction trades and the fees for same. Periodically reviews and holds public hearings on all building, electrical, plumbing, housing, gas, fire prevention and other related codes. Reviews enforcement of all codes relating to construction standards and acts as condemnation board in matters of violation of minimum standards. Hears alleged complaints against contractors.

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:
 - AWA Investment Advisors, 1107 W Marion Avenue, #112
 - Hamilton Group Funding, Inc., 223 Taylor Street, #123
 - Florida Urology Physicians PA, 100 Madrid Blvd.
 - TEAM Punta Gorda, 227 Sullivan Street