

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT APRIL 24, 2020

City Manager

- **Public Works Projects of the Year for 2020** - The City of Punta Gorda has recently been selected as one of American Public Works Association's "Public Works Projects of the Year for 2020" for The Seawall Recovery after Hurricane Irma in the Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair for \$25 million to \$75 million category. The ceremony to receive this prestigious award is scheduled for Aug. 31 at the National American Public Works Association Expo in New Orleans.
- **Burnt Store Isles Undergrounding Results** – Ballots were mailed to 1248 property owners on Mar. 2. Deadline for submission was Apr. 15. A total of 941 voted ballots were received with 932 received ballots being properly executed as follows:
 - YES – 181 Votes (19.42%)
 - NO – 751 Votes (80.58%)City Council will discuss the results of the Straw Ballot at their May 6 meeting.
- **2020 City Election Information** – The next General Election for the City of Punta Gorda will take place on Nov. 3 and will include City Council Districts 1,2 and 4 (to be included on the County's ballot). Councilmembers serve a two (2) year term. Candidate packets are now available through the City Clerk's Office by calling (941) 575-3305. Candidate information and forms are also available online on the City's website at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/city-clerk/elections-and-voting>, as well as from the Department of State Division of Elections website at <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections>. Filed candidates for City district seats must obtain a minimum of 25 but not more than 50 signatures from registered voters in their district to qualify to put their name on the ballot. Qualifying begins Jun. 8 (at noon) and ends at noon on June 12. Petition forms must be obtained from the City Clerk. For information or questions regarding qualifying, please contact Karen Smith, City Clerk, at (941) 575-3305 or email pgclerk@cityofpuntagordafl.com. Questions regarding voter registration, vote-by-mail ballots or precinct and polling information should be directed to the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections Office at (941) 833-5400.
- **FY 2021 Budget** – The community conversation aimed to garner input into development of FY 2021 budget priorities scheduled for Apr. 7 has been cancelled due to COVID-19 social distancing and meeting protocols. However, the City is still seeking public input into budget priorities. Please email your suggestions to citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com through the month of Apr. Staff is planning to present a budget update at a City Council meeting in May.
- **COVID-19 Microsite** – The City of Punta Gorda's COVID-19 microsite continues to provide information about the impact and resources available to the community during these uncertain times. Just as a reminder, the City of Punta Gorda Hounds on Henry Dog Park, playgrounds, tennis, basketball and pickleball courts, benches, pavillions, Ponce Park "Beach", and City buildings remain closed until further notice. Visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/i-want-to/advanced-components/covid-19-microsite> for information updates. Please continue to follow both social and physical distancing protocols as we work together to keep our COVID-19 at bay.

IT

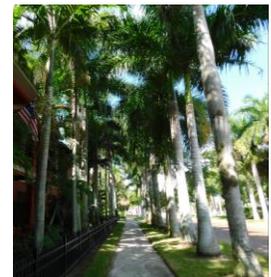
- As “safer at home” settled in and the City decided to temporarily close its doors to public traffic, offering employees that were able the option of working from home was initiated. Over the next 2 weeks we went from one or two employees working from home one to two days a week to 45 of 78 eligible working from home full time. This presented several challenges that were summarily overcome by the IT team as they supported this workforce moving to their new work environment. For hurricane preparedness IT had previously outfitted supervisors and key system administrators with the equipment to work remotely to get the City up and running quickly. The COVID-19 situation necessitated the office staff and support staff to be the first to be moved to teleworking, the complete opposite of what happens in a storm situation. A combination of configuring employee’s home computers and internet to be safely utilized for performing work tasks and issuing hot spots and tablets to connect to the virtual workstations facilitated this transition. Security concerns were addressed through the use of the virtual private networks firewalls and connection service’s vetting. IT Help Desk became focused primarily on working through telework issues striving to keep “time unable to work” at a minimum. There was a lot of information sharing as virtual workstation management, connectivity support, and system configuration issues became the focus of the entire team rather than staying with one individual as was the norm prior to this. All in all, the ability to process these many workers to working in a home environment with no prior notice, adapt the service desk to support these workers and respond to special needs is a tribute to the quality of the City’s IT team.

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). Downtown and Historic District (W. Marion Ave., W. Olympia Ave., Shreve St., and Harvey St.) East Side and the area behind Dunkin Donuts (E. Marion Ave, E Olympia Ave, Narranja St, E Henry St, and Cooper St).

Urban Design

- **Celebrating Arbor Day 2020** – The first Arbor Day took place on April 10, 1872 in Nebraska. Originally from Michigan, Julius Sterling Morton, a Nebraska journalist and politician worked throughout his lifetime, to improve agricultural techniques and is credited for improving Nebraska’s landscape and economy through a wide scale planting of trees. As a member of Nebraska’s state board of agriculture, Morton proposed a day be set aside dedicated to tree planting and increasing the awareness of the importance of trees. This special day was an AMAZING success and is now celebrated in all 50 states and in many countries. Over the years the City has celebrated Arbor Day on the fourth Friday of April with tree planting celebrations, poster contests and 5th grade tree classes. This year will be very different however, as we remain committed to slowing the spread of the coronavirus. Although there will be no tree planting celebrations, we are positive the spirit of Arbor Day will remain strong in Punta Gorda. The community learned to be more creative in finding ways to celebrate in different ways. Whether it be through ZOOM visits with family, a walk or hike through the linear parks, online learning about trees, drawing or photographing you favorite trees City Staff hopes you will continue to celebrate this wonderful day! After all, there are many benefits to being around trees, including less stress. So we ask that you share your photos all weekend on FB on how you and your family celebrated Arbor Day 2020.



For more information on how to celebrate Arbor Day in a Time of Social Distancing go to: <https://arbordayblog.org/celebrate-arbor-day/6-ways-to-celebrate-arbor-day-in-a-time-of-social-distancing/> .

- **Florida Power & Light** – FPL is continuing their efforts to improve service to our community through their storm hardening plan. Over the next few weeks they will continue to remove vegetation in the downtown and PGI areas so as to ensure better power reliability, access to their facilities for maintenance and storm secure hardening upgrades. Once these trees are removed staff will review the areas and determine if additional trees need to be replanted. These improvements are occurring statewide plan that includes the completion of hardening main (feeder) power lines serving critical community facilities, upgrading the main power lines across FPL's service area, initiating upgrades of smaller neighborhood (lateral) power lines and continuing to replace wooden transmission line structures with steel and concrete towers.



Public Works

Engineering

- **ADA Interior Signage and Wayfinding** - The signs for the Public Works and Utilities Campus are being installed. Installation is anticipated to be completed by mid-May.
- **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 724 properties totaling 540,300 square feet of grading/sodding. Work completed during the week of April 20 included 801-841 Monaco Dr. Work is underway at 3818-3840 Bordeaux Dr. and 3380-3398 Tripoli Blvd.
- **Harborwalk (Gilchrist Gazebo to Berry)** – The contractor has begun submitting documents for the Engineers review and approval. Construction is anticipated to commence the first week in May 2020.
- **FDOT - US 41 Carmalita Street to Marion Ave. within City of Punta Gorda -**

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
US 41 From Carmalita Street to Marion Avenue
Signalization Improvement Project in Charlotte County

Financial Project ID: 440670-1-52-01,440670-1-52-02 April 2020

The Florida Department of Transportation's contractor, Highway Safety Devices, will begin work late April 2020 to install new signals on US 41 from Carmalita Street to Marion Avenue in Charlotte County. The project area is identified on the project location map. The construction will take place Monday through Friday during daytime and nighttime/overnight hours, weather permitting. Lane closures may occur during daytime hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

START DATE: Late April 2020
ESTIMATED COMPLETION: Early Fall 2020
PROJECT COST: \$1.3 million
CONTRACTOR: Highway Safety Devices

For more information about the project, contact:

Lisa Macias Community Outreach Manager (239) 337-1071 Lisa.Macias@dot.state.fl.us	Zachary Burch Communications Manager (239) 225-1950 Zachary.Burch@dot.state.fl.us
--	--

- **Madrid Sidewalk Construction** - The contractor is working on punchlist with Final Completion scheduled on or before May 15.
- **Paving Program (E. Charlotte Ave. from US 41 SB to Cooper St.)** – Beginning on April 27, 2020 through Friday, May 1, 2020 (weather and equipment operations permitting) milling and pavement resurfacing is scheduled on E. Charlotte Ave. from US 41 SB to Cooper St. The road will be open to local traffic only. Detours and impact to traffic are to be anticipated. Hours of operation will be between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. When driving in the area, motorists are encouraged to drive with extreme caution and be alert for workers in the right-of-ways. For information on this project, please contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager, City of Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941) 575-5060 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday.
- **Sullivan Street renovation** – The bid opening was extended due to lack of bidders.

Canal Maintenance -

- **Mangrove Trimming** – Annual mangrove trimming is underway. Work has commenced in Burnt Store Isles.
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** - The seawall replacement contractor has completed 12 seawall replacement projects in PGI and there are six projects under construction. Three seawall replacement projects have been completed in BSI and there are two projects under construction. A seawall replacement project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
 - Crews filled depressions at 30 locations.
 - Crews performed four seawall cap and seam patches (76' linear ft.).
 - Crews completed one sonar survey for dredging depth.

Police Department

- **National Volunteer Week** – This week was National Volunteer Week. Our Volunteers in Policing (VIP) program started in 1997 when eleven members of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary joined the police department as Marine Officer Assistant Volunteers. Since that time our program has grown to over 80 volunteers assisting with all aspect of the department including records, vehicle patrol, bike patrol, marine patrol, criminal investigations, accreditation, community services, training, the police chaplain program, and more! Unfortunately, our VIP program is currently suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic, but we want our volunteers to know how much we appreciate them, miss them, and hope they are back with us soon!
- **Beware of Stimulus Scams** – Make sure not to fall for phone calls, text messages, email, or website that ask for personal or financial information in order to receive your stimulus money. The IRS will never contact you to request personal information. If you have questions or concerns regarding your stimulus payment, please visit www.irs.gov/coronavirus.
- **Police Officer Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Sept. 14 with oral board interviews scheduled on Sept. 15 and Sept. 16. You can apply to participate by visiting www.pgpdjobs.com. For more information, please contact the Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. Testing will be held on Sept. 21. To apply visit www.pgpdjobs.com. For more information, please contact the Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.

- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Fall Semester of 2020 and the Spring Semester of 2021. 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. Please contact the internship program coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.

Fire Department

- **Special thank you** – Firefighter/EMT Kaitlin McCausland received a visit and a heartfelt letter from Mr. Robert Bendele. Kaitlin saved Mr. Bendele from drowning on Mar. 20 of this year. Mr. Bendele expressed, *“I can’t put into words the amazing job you did for me. I will try to put into words how I feel about you. The Punta Gorda Fire Department has one outstanding employee. My wife, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and friends are very grateful that you were able to save my life.”* Thank you Kaitlin and all of PGFD for the important difference you make in the City of Punta Gorda.



Finance Department

- In an effort to help out during this unprecedented time, the City of Punta Gorda has chosen to temporarily absorb the credit card transaction fees for all payments made on-line through the City’s website. If you have any questions regarding transaction fees, please contact the Billing and Collections office at pgcollections@cityofpuntagordafl.com or 941-639-2528.

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 94- Loading R.O. membranes into the treatment skids

Water Treatment Plant Operations

- The Water Treatment Plant Supervisor with help from the Procurement Division and the Finance Director was able to recover \$ 110,992.00 in chemical overcharges for chemicals used in water treatment in the past.
- 37.2 MG of water was delivered to the distribution system with a 5.3 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 April 2019 1.30” April 2020 1.00”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “very hard” – Grains of Hardness 20 ppm – Total hardness 342 ppm
- TDS for April 23 – Current 580 ppm, Low 389 ppm, High 611 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 526 ppm
- Reservoir April 23 – Current 5.02’, Record Low 4.68’, Record High 5.72’, 55 Year Avg. 5.10’

City Clerk

- Due to the COVID-19 situation, all City board and committee meetings continue to be suspended. However, the City Clerk’s Office will continue to announce vacancies and accept new Board Appointment Information Forms (available online at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/boards-committees>) from interested citizens for City Council consideration so that we are prepared to resume meetings with a full quorum of members when it is safe to do so.

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

- Board of Zoning Appeals – (One alternate vacancy) Meets the 4th Tuesday at 4 p.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms - maximum of three terms. Financial disclosure required. Makes recommendations to City Council on variances to City Code.
- Building Board – (Two consumer advocate seats) Meets the 4th 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.
- Utility Advisory Board - 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 with regard to, but not limited to, revisions to the utility construction standards, alleged billing discrepancies and review of utility drawings and specifications.