

Communication from Lynne Matthews, Mayor  
Punta Gorda City Council District 4

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A drone takes flight over the City looking northeast.  
Photo provided by John Elias.

**Here is your Weekly Highlights Report for May 10, 2024.**  
For the complete report from the City, click [HERE](#).

**Happy Mother's Day to all moms and grandmothers!** I wish you all a wonderful day filled with love and pampering this Sunday. Hopefully you can spend the day relaxing and letting your family take care of you. Enjoy!



**Drug Free Charlotte County awards** - This week I had the honor of attending the annual Drug Free Charlotte County awards event.

The Legacy Award was presented to State Attorney General Ashley Moody. Ms. Moody was a pleasure to speak with. She has made tremendous progress in the fight against illegal drugs, working closely with PGPD Police Chief Smith and Sheriff



Prummell to get these drugs off the streets of Charlotte County and all throughout the State of Florida.

**CCSO Quarterly awards** - The Sheriff's Department held their 1st Quarter Awards ceremony this week. There was a very special presentation given to Sgt. Dave Musgrove, who on February 8 was the first officer on scene



on SR 776, after he observed a motorcycle go speeding by him, followed by a large cloud of dust up ahead. When he came upon the scene, he witnessed a very serious motorcycle vs. car accident. He ran to the car, rescued a 3-year old little girl, then went back to the vehicle to rescue a 6-month old girl from the vehicle who was trapped underneath the driver of the motorcycle and was unresponsive and not breathing. He performed CPR on her and

brought her back to life. Very few things in the news get to me the way this story and video did, and he deserves all the recognition anyone can give him. Last night, Vice Mayor Dryburgh and I got to meet both Sgt. Musgrove and the infant girl he saved. Little Lola made a miraculous recovery, having survived that horrific accident, and she is as adorable as can be...and now as you can see in the photo has a very special bond with this officer. Thank you, Sgt. Musgrove. You are truly a hero! And also, special thanks also to the gentleman who stopped to assist at the scene, as well as all the first responders who took over upon arrival and got the family transported to hospitals to care for the three of them.

**Fallen Police Officers Memorial Ceremony** - This week was filled with many ceremonies.

On Tuesday, the Charlotte County Sheriff's office and the Punta Gorda Police Department came together to honor those officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. I was honored to participate in the program by reading a proclamation from the City. Over 200 people attended this event.



**City Manager** - Although it seems too soon to think about hurricane readiness, it is time to ensure you and your family are prepared. Residents and city workers are encouraged to have hurricane preparedness at the top of their minds. The city makes many preparations in advance of the season to protect our assets and respond and recover as quickly as possible from any storm situation. Residents also need to take similar precautions. All residents must take action now to prepare for hurricane season 2024.



For some, this will be the first time they must prepare for a potential storm in Punta Gorda. Others will recall the devastation of Charley, Irma, and Ian and their impact on the city, homes, and businesses. Simple preparations can be done well in advance of a storm. Share your contact information with neighbors and close friends to ensure you have a way to communicate after the storm. Put your storm shutters up and keep your trees and shrubs trimmed. Create a weatherproof box containing all essential insurance policies, contractor phone numbers, bank accounts, investment accounts, utility company accounts, etc., so you have something to start with after the storm. Ensure sunblock, insect repellent, first aid, and tire plug kits are on hand. Purchase bleach and extra cleaning supplies. Buy extra garbage bags, toilet paper, and paper towels. Fill your grill's propane tanks for cooking during a power outage. Have bottled water and non-perishable food for each household member, including your pets. In the event that you need to evacuate, have a plan in place of where you will go and what you will need to bring with you. And don't wait until the last minute! There are often long lines at gas pumps when a storm is imminent. Shelters fill up quickly, so be prepared in advance. Keeping your car's gas tank full is also recommended during hurricane season.

The City website has a variety of printable publications that can aid in resident

preparation, which are available by clicking [HERE](#). While you are on the City website, sign up for Alert Punta Gorda. This service notifies residents of any weather or other related emergency. You can receive alerts on your home or business phone, mobile phone, email, text message, or more based on your settings.

A Home Hardening Sales Tax Exemption, provided by the State of Florida, is still in place through June 30. This allows Florida residents to purchase impact-resistant windows, doors, and garage doors without paying sales tax. Starting in July, the My Safe Florida Home program will begin taking applications again. The program was created to strengthen Florida homes against hurricanes and save Florida homeowners money. The My Safe Florida program information is available by clicking [HERE](#).

Prepare for the worst and hope for the best as we enter the time of the year when weather dominates our plans. Unfortunately, we know all too well what havoc a hurricane can create. A little preparation now will make coping with hurricane precautions and impacts easier as we get into hurricane season. Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at [citymgr@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:citymgr@cityofpuntafordafl.com) or by calling the main office line at 941-575-3302.

**City Council** - City Council will meet on May 15 at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum.

Here are a few of the items that will be discussed:

- \* Boat Club lease discussion
- \* Approval to purchase a tract of submerged land from Punta Gorda Isles, Inc.
- \* Securing bicycles and electric bikes to City infrastructure prohibition.

**Florida sales tax holidays** - The Governor has once again signed a tax break package authorizing an annual sales tax holiday for Florida residents.

Hurricane supplies - June 1-14 and August 24-September 6 will be tax free for hurricane season supplies, such as tarps, batteries and flashlights.

Back to school - July 29-August 11. No tax on pens, pencils, computers, clothing priced at \$100 or less and other school supplies.

Tool savings - September 1-7, no sales tax on power tools, hand tools, toolboxes and other items.

Outdoor items - July 1-31, no sales tax on items such as fishing supplies, pool floats, outdoor equipment. Also, admissions to museums and state parks are sales tax free.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

**Swale regrading** - The swale contractor has completed Don Quixote Dr., Brazilia Ct., Darin Dr., Padre Island Dr., Casey Key Dr. (SW) and Ussepa Ct. which have been finalized and turned over to the homeowner. The contractor will be watering the sod for the next 30 days weather permitting at Casey Key Dr. (SE), Turtle Dove Cir., Sea Horse Ct. and Sea Fan Dr. They have excavated approximately 67,000 SF this fiscal year. The next street to be excavated will be Grebe Dr.

**Laisley Park 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 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.



**Right-of-way -**

- \* Crews completed a drainage project behind the Justice Center. This should reduce the buildup of water collecting on Nesbit St.
- \* Crews are removing dead royal palms on Marion Ave, on the east side of town.
- \* The catch basin on Milus St. next to the Harborwalk is being repaired.



**Fiber optic internet network** - The fiber optic internet provider Hyper Fiber has been issued permits for a portion of the construction project to install a citywide fiber optic internet network within the City right-of-way. This project will be under construction during the next several months as they install the network citywide.



They are currently working in the areas highlighted in red below. The green areas are where the work is completed and their permit has been inspected for final by the engineering department. Additional areas are scheduled to be final in the next several weeks. The blue areas are where the installation will be taking place as the project progresses.

Initially you will see utility markings within the City right-of-way, followed by the directional drilling of the fiber optic conduit. Fiber optic boxes will be installed in the right-of-way or easement at the edge of your property. Once the installation of the underground and service points has been completed for the entire sector, crews will then return to individual locations for the restoration of sod. This will take place at the end of construction in each sector. Please be patient and allow time for the restoration. The City engineering department will be performing spot inspections during construction as well as a final inspection when the restoration is complete to ensure the contractor's restoration meets the City's requirements. Hyper Fiber has provided a telephone number to call if citizens have questions or concerns about the project and installation. Please contact Hyper Fiber's Scott Jackson at 239-887-5379. Please use extra caution while driving through the project area due to construction

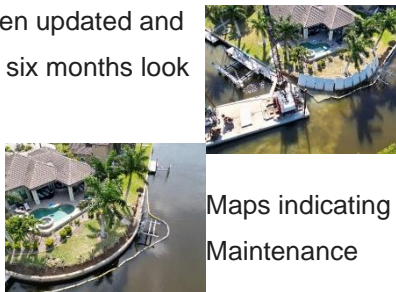
personnel and equipment.

**Voting information** - This is going to be a big year for voting, from everything at the federal level for the President of the United States, to local elections at both the City and County level. Here are some important dates to put on your calendar in advance of the upcoming primary and general elections. Make sure you update your Vote By Mail status, as you have to do it after every general election now by Florida statute. For information, click [HERE](#).

<b>Election Days</b> Presidential Preference Primary Election: March 19, 2024 Primary Election: August 20, 2024 General Election: November 5, 2024	<b>Early Voting Dates</b> Presidential Preference Primary Election: March 4-17, 2024 Primary: August 5-18, 2024 General: October 21-November 3, 2024
<b>New Registration/Party Affiliation Change Deadline!</b> Punta Gorda City Election: October 10, 2023 Presidential Preference Primary Election: February 20, 2024 Primary Election: July 22, 2024 General Election: October 7, 2024	<b>Vote by Mail Dates</b> (F.S. 101.62) The initial batch of Vote by Mail ballots will be mailed out between the 40th and 33rd days prior to an election to those voters who have already requested them. Subsequent mailings will be mailed out daily as new requests are received.

**Licensed/unlicensed contractors** - As a reminder, all contractors who will be performing structural work on your home (roofs, pool cages, soffits, etc.) must be a contractor licensed in the State of Florida - click [HERE](#) to check on a specific company, AND they must also be registered with the City of Punta Gorda in order to be able to pull a building permit, which is required by law. You can check on the status of a contractor's registration with the City by clicking [HERE](#) and typing in the name of the company you wish to check on. Failure for a contractor to have the appropriate licensing and registration could result in a felony for the contractor. Additionally, they may not have the required insurance and liability insurances that the state requires. Please do your homework before you sign anything!

**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 22 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 77 projects completed, and 10 projects under construction with 15 completed in Burnt Store Isles. the location and classification can be found on the Canal website - click [HERE](#).



Maps indicating Maintenance

**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 Inlets are Idle Speed and No Wake. Wakes from watercraft can cause additional erosion and damage to seawalls already compromised. And please remember that you are responsible for your wake. If your vessel causes damage to a property or another vessel, you may be subject to fines or penalties.

**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. Our area is still experiencing rain

events and that plastic will help keep the soil in place preventing further erosion.

**Establishing sod after seawall replacement** - Placing the sod is the final phase of seawall replacement construction. As per 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.

**Dock Match program** - The Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance (PGBA) has once again set up a program called *Dock Match*, which is to help facilitate relocation of boats that will need to be temporarily relocated from properties that had seawall failures. If you have a dock that is vacant and would like to make it available to another PGI or BSI boat owner, please click [HERE](#) to register your dock. Boat owners will have a list available to assist them in connecting with you to try and match their needs to your dock availability. I worked with the PGBA after Hurricane Irma to set this up in 2017 and it was used quite a lot by many residents. This program has been approved by the PGBA and the City of Punta Gorda.



**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 kind of dredging along the damaged seawall may cause further damage.

**Answers to some of your questions** - I receive many questions each week from residents, asking all kinds of things about Punta Gorda activities. Here is one from this week:

*What is the status of the Bayfront Center building at Gilchrist Park?* Sorry, but this is going to be a long one, folks! There have been numerous inspections for this property by both insurance and FEMA, and the building has been declared a total loss. Additionally, just because a building is old does not make it historic. I am also including a very detailed response from the City Manager related to a request from a resident, which explains the entire process since the hurricane. Finally, the building could not be renovated as it stands currently, because of the FEMA 50% rule and the current elevation of the property. It is in a hurricane velocity zone, meaning it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars just to bring it up to 2024 FEMA required standards including raising the elevation substantially, which would not be reimbursable by insurance or FEMA.

Here is the City Manager's information: There are several facets to the project as it stands:  
\*50% rule - This was changed by many surrounding counties and City Council after Ian so that it was harder to hit the 50% threshold. That change was made so that homeowners did not hit the threshold as quickly as when a five-year lookback was in place, meaning that homeowners had more of an opportunity to simply fix damage instead of needing to comply

with current building codes that would require substantial expense, or in many cases even demolition.

\* After Ian, the insurance company sent a contractor to do an assessment and determine loss based on pre-Ian condition. Their determination was that it was a total loss at \$994,000 in the damage estimate.

\* Subsequent to that and for FEMA consideration, another independent estimate was required and completed by a contractor to compare with the depreciated value as required by FEMA regulations. The damage estimate was \$998,000 this time to put back in pre-Ian condition vs. a value of \$702,000 for the building itself. Obviously exceeding the 50% threshold even with the newer criteria, and certainly requiring further action. The first estimate could not be used because the contractor that worked for us worked for the insurance company, and that was not considered independent.

Given that information, the following occurred:

\* After the first evaluation directly after Ian, it was evident that the building would need to be razed. Anything deemed sentimental or of value was removed and stored for safe keeping. The only thing preventing further action was an approved assessment for new FEMA contacts that again showed total damage. The first estimate could not be used as I referenced because the contractor that worked for us worked for the insurance company, and that was not considered independent. FEMA approval was needed so that we could indeed recover any money if available as referenced.

\* A sign was also posted that stated the building is unsafe. That was based on the initial engineering evaluation showing substantial structural damage.

\* An evaluation for lead and asbestos was commissioned due to building condition and necessary action. Asbestos was of course found.

\* No further action was taken until the FEMA requirements were met. This was not because the building could be repaired or was historically significant, but in order to save additional pointless expenditures on a structure contaminated/to be razed. If FEMA did not require duplicate evaluations at even more expense, the building would already be down.

Some additional preliminary information considered during building discussion: The Bayfront Center is not listed on the Florida Master Site File (FMSF), the State maintained list of potentially historic structures, objects, and sites. This structure was surveyed during the historic resources survey update for the City (2012-2014). This particular site was recorded on a form provided by the State of Florida, with maps and photos taken at the time of survey. The State form on page 2 contains a section titled "Opinion of Resource Significance." This section states that the resource did not meet the criteria for listing on the National Register as an individual entity nor as part of a district. The explanation of this evaluation states, "In its current altered state this structure does not exhibit any significant historic or architectural characteristics." During a subsequent review of the historic survey sites by the Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB), the board concurred with the Opinion of Resource Significance recommending against listing this structure on the proposed Local Register of

Historic Places. Although the structure may have sentimental value to some, the structure is made up of multiple separate parts built over time. The original 1956 small ranch house like structure originally known as the "Scout House" or "Boy Scout House" was completely changed by two large inconsistent additions that tripled or more the size of the structure. It is the size, location, and configuration of these architecturally inconsistent additions that renders this essentially a damaged building with no true historic value according to the review by the experts. That is why any items that were deemed sentimental were removed.

The contractor's estimate verified that the initial cost provided by the insurance company contractor post-lan was very close. The initial assessment was done as part of the whole City damage assessment directly after lan occurred. It shows significant initial damage versus building value. That damage was not such that the structure degraded over time because of lack of attention, as shown by the independent evaluation received last month. It was already a total loss. Of course that is only part of the consideration. What can be seen is costly, but the foundation in that zone is equally non-compliant. It is not constructed to prevent scour and building damage regardless of what kind of structure would be placed on top. Some may remember the cost of the bathrooms in Gilchrist that initially exceeded \$1M because of the foundation requirements. That gives you an idea of scope but is not included in these costs, on top of elevation requirements, etc., or any subsequent design criteria. The mandatory federal requirement is the only thing the evaluation takes into consideration - building value vs. repair cost to see what is or is not allowable.

The general appraisal reports states "When buildings undergo repair or improvement, it is an opportunity for local floodplain management programs to reduce flood damage to existing structures. More than 21,000 communities participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which is managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). To participate in the NFIP, communities must adopt and enforce regulations and codes that apply to new development in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). Local floodplain management regulations and codes contain minimum NFIP requirements that apply not only to new structures, but also to existing structures which are "substantially improved (SI)" or "substantially damaged (SD)." Enforcing the SI/SD requirements is a very important part of a community's floodplain management responsibility. There are many factors that local officials will need to consider and several scenarios they may encounter while implementing the SI/SD requirements." Having these procedures in place is, as you know, one component that allows us to have reduced rates as part of the NFIP. Recently Lee County as one example has come under Federal scrutiny for perceived non-compliance with severe potential monetary consequences.

We have received the insured value of the building from the insurance company. Of course, some of that payment is needed for the required building evaluations, razing, etc. We know that we can potentially receive additional money from insurance if a structure is rebuilt, but only if additional insurance is paid for by the City that reflects construction in the zone in which this building is located. That by itself is substantial and lends itself to the



question of whether the building should be constructed at this location, somewhere else, or not at all. That is a Council decision. The Council commissioned a committee to review the information provided and make a recommendation on potential locations. Obviously, opinions vary. Some opting for a different, open, user-friendly structure that would be both inexpensive and useful using the existing slab, others think it should be rebuilt right where it stands, and others that it should be built somewhere else. The committee itself recommended several locations that could be evaluated, including the current location.

We know we can potentially get reimbursement from FEMA for our insurance deductible, and potentially money to help rebuild the facility as you referenced, but total cost vs. benefit as well as monetary implications for the City in construction and future expenditures could be substantial. For example, when the public works campus was moved out of harms way after Charley, FEMA would not participate nor obligate funds to help reconstruct facilities. They also will only pay for damage to a facility once, so is it prudent to build where future damage will likely occur is a question. In another vein, others argue that City Hall should not be rebuilt on its current location because of flooding, while arguing that this structure should remain. A bit of a dichotomy with which Council must struggle.

At the end of the day, and when that decision is made, we will maximize all funding sources available if that is the direction chosen. At this point, we again have no obligation of funds nor commitment from FEMA to pay additional for the structure to be rebuilt according to current codes in that location, but meet with them every week and are aware of their programs. We will have more information in the near future.

If you ever have a question you would like answered, please email me at [lmattews@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:lmattews@cityofpuntafordafl.com). I respond to all emails that are personally directed to me, or I will ask a staff member to respond to you. Occasionally, staff needs to respond if it is a complex answer, and sometimes it takes a few days to research various subjects. Please be patient, as we will get back with you.

**Military Heritage Museum** - Stop in to see the fascinating interactive exhibits, and check out the schedule of wonderful entertainment in the Gulf Theater. Our mission is to promote an understanding and respect for the rich military heritage of the United States and the sacrifices made by all who serve, living and deceased, emphasizing that freedom isn't free. For more information, click [HERE](#). To check out the schedule for this season's fabulous shows in the Gulf Theater - click [HERE](#).



**Would you like to be on the mailing list for the Military Heritage Museum, and receive advance notice of upcoming events?** If so, please click [HERE](#). You MUST include your name and email address in your request in order to add you to the database.

**There are a lot of great events coming up in town, so don't miss out on these:**

May 18, Mental Health Walk, Laishley Park, for more information contact

[kpomerville@cbhcfi.org](mailto:kpomerville@cbhcfi.org)

May 18 - Home and Hurricane Expo, Event Center. For information, click [HERE](#).

May 18 - Day of Celtic Music, Fishermen's Village. For information, click [HERE](#).

May 25-26 - Indoor Arts and Crafts Show, Event Center. For information, click [HERE](#).

May 25 - Downtown Bash. For information, click [HERE](#). contact [jwright@puntagorda-chamber.com](mailto:jwright@puntagorda-chamber.com)

May 27 - Memorial Day 5K, Laishley Park. For information, contact

[acappuccilli@ymcaswfl.org](mailto:acappuccilli@ymcaswfl.org)

June 1 - Island Vibe Music Festival, Laishley Park. For information, click [HERE](#).

June 1-2 - Punta Gorda Gun Show, Event Center. For information, click [HERE](#).

June 8-9 - Spirit Fest, Event Center. For information, click [HERE](#).

June 15 - Blues Fest, Fishermen's Village. For information, click [HERE](#).

July 4 - Fourth of July festivities, Fishermen's Village. For information, click [HERE](#).

For upcoming events and festivals from the City's website, click [HERE](#).

Punta Gorda Chamber's events page - click [HERE](#).

Charlotte County Visitors Bureau events page - click [HERE](#).

Gulf Theater at the Military Heritage Museum - click [HERE](#).

Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association - click [HERE](#).

Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, click [HERE](#).

Visual Arts Center events, click [HERE](#).

Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce events, click [HERE](#).

Fishermen's Village events, click [HERE](#). For all Fishermen's Village event information, you must go to the calendar under Events and click on the specific listing for details.

### **Police Department:**

**Fallen Officer Memorial** - On the evening of

May 7, Chief Pamela Smith and officers of the Punta Gorda Police Department took part in the Law Enforcement Fallen Officer Memorial event at the William R. Gaines Memorial Park



with the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office. Roses were laid in honor of law enforcement officers who gave their lives in the line of duty. Red roses represent officers killed both state and nationwide in 2023 and pink roses symbolize officers who died in Charlotte County.

National Police Week begins on May 12, with May 15, recognized as National Peace Officers Memorial Day.

**Volunteers In Policing (VIP)** - Our volunteers are an absolutely vital part of this police department and we appreciate them greatly! Members of the community interested in volunteering may contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at 941-575-5536 or by emailing

[vip@pgorda.us](mailto:vip@pgorda.us).

**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 June. 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 conducts new hire testing continually in order to be prepared for future openings. We are currently accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. The exam will be held virtually between June 14 and June 21. Applications must be received by June 7.

**Internship program** - The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the fall of 2024 and spring of 2025 semesters. Our internship program is open to college students and high school seniors interested in gaining educational experience in law enforcement, criminal justice, and small government administration. Spots fill up quickly and the selection process can be competitive, so we encourage potential interns to apply today!

**To apply for employment or for more information, please visit [www.pgpdjobs.com](http://www.pgpdjobs.com) or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at 941-575-5571 or by email at [employeedevelopment@pgorda.us](mailto:employeedevelopment@pgorda.us).**

**Fire Department: BOSAR** - The fire department was able to send five employees through another Boat Operations Search and Rescue (BOSAR) class this week. Battalion Chief Joe Lindsey, and Firefighter's; CW McLeod, Kyle Raymond, Darin McCurdy and Evan Griffith all attended the five-day training. This class focuses on U.S. Coast Guard search patterns for lost persons or vessels, marine operations and multi-departmental communications.



**Rescue swimmer training** - This week, crews participated in the annual Watermanship test at South County Pool. This type of intense training is meant to ensure our rescue swimmers are prepared for whatever type of water rescue incident they may be called to. It is also a tremendous confidence booster for our firefighters as it challenges them both mentally and physically. The test consisted of a freestyle swim of 500 yards, treading water for 15 minutes, swimming another 800 yards using masks and fins, free diving to retrieve items on the bottom of the dive well, and finally swimming 100 yards while simulating rescuing an injured swimmer in a life jacket. A special thanks to our Dive Master/FTO Josh Roebuck, who was the lead on this training module.

**Planning Corner:** The City of Punta Gorda Code Compliance wishes to remind the community of the hazards, and violations, associated to overgrown vegetation as we approach the rainy season. Property owners are required to



maintain all landscape areas, trees, and shrubs in a neat and healthy condition free of diseased, dead, or bare areas and free of debris and weeds (Chapter 26, Section 8.11(e)). Areas that are overgrown and creating a visual blight or dangerous condition by the potential blockage of public right-of-way, sidewalks, etc., are subject to the code violation process (Chapter 9, Section 9-2(g)). Any questions or concerns on the matter may be forwarded to the Code Compliance team at [code@cityofpuntagordafl.com](mailto:code@cityofpuntagordafl.com).

#### **Sanitation:**

**Residential yard waste** - Yard waste debris must be curbside by 6 a.m. on the scheduled yard waste collection day. If you have any questions or to schedule a special pick-up, please contact Public Works 941-575-5050 or click [HERE](#).

Residents are not permitted to place yard debris that is generated from their property, vacant lots or greenbelts on the cul-de-sac for collection. If a resident trims the cul-de-sac and vegetation remains, please contact Public Works for collection.

**Loose yard waste pile** - Palm fronds, limbs, etc. shall not exceed 4" in diameter or 4' in length. These items must be tied and bundled for collection; bundles shall weigh no more than 35 pounds. Shrubbery, grass clippings and leaves must be placed at the curb in containers. Containers shall not exceed 32 gallons in size or 35 pounds in weight and must have handles. Biodegradable paper bags designated for yard waste collection are allowed. Staff is not required to rake, pick up or remove any remaining leaves or small pieces of debris from the ground left behind by the grapple truck.

**Single family residents** - Are allowed no more than three (3) yardwaste cans or bags per week. The city does not provide cans for yard waste and residents can purchase a cart from any local hardware store. Please be sure the cart has a lid, wheels and metal bar across the front.

**Tree removal** - Tree removal and lot clearing is NOT a part of your regular service. If you have a whole tree removed you must first contact Urban Design to confirm if a permit is required 941-575-3372 or click [HERE](#). The homeowner or company that removes the tree is responsible for hauling away the remains. The City does NOT collect whole tree remains or lot clearing remains.

**Unacceptable material** - Lot clearing debris, tree removal, wood, dirt or rocks, cement edging, mulch, sod, fruit, straw and hay will not be collected by yard waste crews.

**Vacant lots** - Vacant lots are not eligible for trash or yard waste services. Please do not place any trash or yard waste on vacant lots. The debris will not be collected. Undeveloped properties do not pay for trash, yard waste or recycling services.

**Loose yard waste collection delays** - Due to the enormous amount 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.

**Human Resources: Open positions** - The City of Punta Gorda offers a very generous benefit package to include medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and a defined contribution retirement plan with matching contributions. Currently hiring for a professional position in Utilities Maintenance Worker II - Water Treatment Plant - A skilled laborer position responsible for the maintenance and repair of water treatment plant equipment and systems. Maintain plant grounds and buildings. Performs plumbing repairs and construction on treatment facilities and grounds. The City of Punta Gorda has a variety of employment opportunities available learn more by clicking [HERE](#).



**Heat can be a killer** - The combination of hot weather and high humidity can quickly cause heat-related illness to set in. The National Weather Service issues advisories for high heat to warn you of the dangers.

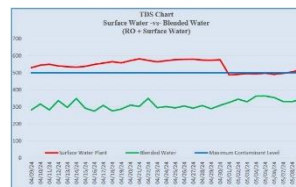
**Safety Tips:**

- \* Slow down.
- \* Dress for summer. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- \* Foods (like proteins) that increase metabolic heat production also increase water loss.
- \* Drink plenty of water or non-alcoholic fluids.
- \* Do not drink alcoholic beverages.
- \* Spend more time in air-conditioned places.
- \* Don't get too much sun. Sunburn makes the job of heat dissipation that much more difficult.

**Punta Gorda Utilities media advisory** - Due to the current dry conditions and high temperatures, our drinking water source is experiencing taste and odor issues. These issues are aesthetic in nature only and do not pose a health risk to our customers. As such, there is no boil water notice in effect for this issue. We want to assure you that we are closely monitoring the situation and are taking appropriate steps to address the issue. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your understanding during this time.

**Lot mowing** - The lot mowing cycle is complete. The City will begin a new mowing cycle on May 20.

**Groundwater RO plant update** - Maximum total dissolved solids (TDS) allowable is 500 without a waiver. Our numbers are consistently way below the maximum allowable level with the R.O. Plant water in service.



**Welcome to new or transferred businesses in the City this week** - Creator's Touch, 150 Lashley Court, Unit 112.

**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 November 5, if there are two candidates for one district. A primary election will take place on August 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.

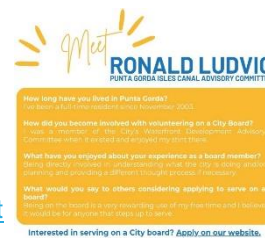
\* Candidate packets are now available for the 2024 election cycle. The packet can be viewed on the City Clerk page of the City website. Bound copies are available to interested parties who make an appointment with the City Clerk's Office to review the materials contained in the packet and to complete an acknowledgement of their receipt.

\* Filed candidates will be listed on the website upon submission of Form DS-DE 9.

**Update signature** - 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 to update yours during regular business hours.

**Vote By Mail** - 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 - click [HERE](#).

**Board and committee vacancies: Volunteers needed** - Vacancies currently exist on the Building Board, Code Enforcement Board, Historic Preservation Advisory Board, Donation Review Committee and Utility Advisory Board. If you are interested in applying for any position, please contact the City Clerk's office at 941-575-3369 or [pgclerk@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:pgclerk@cityofpuntafordafl.com). You must complete an [Appointment Information Form](#) along with a resume and submit to the City Clerk's Office either in person to City Hall at 326 W. Marion Ave., or to email address above.



If you ever have a question you would like answered, please email me at [lmattews@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:lmattews@cityofpuntafordafl.com). I respond to all emails that are personally directed to me, as long as the questions are not related to an upcoming public hearing. Elected officials are not permitted to discuss issues or offer opinions on items that will come before us for a vote. If I don't have the answers to your questions, I will get it for you.

Thanks for staying in touch with what's happening in Punta Gorda. I hope that you find this newsletter informative. If you would like to share it with others, please feel free to do so. If you know anyone else who may want to receive this, please have them email me their name, email address and zip code, and I'll be happy to add them to the distribution list. Also,

if you change your email address, please let me know it is changed so you can continue to receive the newsletter - go to the bottom of the newsletter and "Update your preferences" to keep it current.

**A note to readers of this newsletter** - If you or your email server report my newsletter as having spammy content, it sends a message to Mail Chimp that you have not accepted receipt of the newsletter and it will automatically remove you from my subscriber list. Most of the time, this is unintentional. However if you somehow find you stop receiving it each week, this is the reason. Once you are removed from the database, you stop receiving it permanently. If I see that this happens, I will attempt one time to send you an email and let you know you need to accept a resubscribe request in order to get back into the database. Also, a few of my readers have experienced periodic problems with not receiving this newsletter. It seems that some of the virus prevention programs send the newsletter to spam from time to time, especially if the newsletter is lengthy. Please ensure you have the sending email address in your address book, which is [upstateone@comcast.net](mailto:upstateone@comcast.net). And if you suddenly stop receiving this, please be sure to check your spam folder. I never delete anyone from the subscriber list unless I am asked to do so. Apologies for any inconvenience.

If at any time, you would like to get in touch to ask a question, feel free to contact me.

**Lynne R. Matthews**

**Mayor, City of Punta Gorda**

**Punta Gorda City Council District 4**

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and on Facebook,

<https://www.facebook.com/lynnematthewspgcitycouncil/>

