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March Kicks Off an Important Time of Citizen Engagement

This is an exciting time for Punta Gorda residents. March will be the start of citizen engagement as the City begins the process of developing an updated City-wide Master Plan. To that end they have engaged the consulting firm of Dover/Kohl who will lead us through this process.

This is the moment where your thoughts and issues can be heard, and merged with the thoughts and ideas of others into a plan for the future. Any of us who have ever played the sidewalk superintendent or complained that no-one is listening, can find a legitimate place for their voices to be heard. It's essential that we show up for this. In fact, it's our responsibility to participate in the process.

Journey to the Future (Presented in January by TEAM Punta Gorda along with the City) was designed to prepare the community to participate in the master planning process. It gave 700 citizens an opportunity to think about best practices that might be good ideas for our town as we chart a course for the future. If you missed Journey, and want to access some of these great ideas, you can watch the video of the sessions at www.teampuntagorda.org.



What is unique about the process this time around is that in addition to ample opportunity for citizen participation, the process also includes an economic development study and a review of our land development regulations to inject a dose of reality into the process. A vision is great, but how realistic is it economically, and how does it compare to our land development regulations?

Much of the work for this process will occur between March 11 and March 18. There are several options for those that want to express their point of view. On March 11th there will be two Charettes that you can register for. One will be held at 9AM while the other takes place at 6PM. Additionally, there are two presentations and four open design studios. The Open Design studios are scattered though-out the week of March 11th to accommodate all schedules. They will provide a casual opportunity for residents to drop by and provide input to the consultants. They will take place March 12th through March 14th between 9 AM and noon, and 5pm to 7pm.

The first presentation will be made to City Council on March 6 , between 9AM and noon, and will be the preliminary findings of Dover/Kohl's Economic & Budgetary Analysis. The second will be the Work-In-

Progress Presentation from 6-8pm with some of Dover/Kohl's preliminary findings. The Master Plan website is www.puntagordamasterplan.com. It contains a great deal of additional information on the master plan process. You can sign up for a charette on this site under events.

You can also volunteer to help out during the process. Volunteers are needed to help set-up and take down sessions, and to serve as greeters. To volunteer contact team@teampuntagorda.org

In other TEAM news, registration is now open for Southwest Florida's premier bicycling event, Pedal & Play in Paradise which will take place March 22 & 23. With your Pedal & Play registration comes the choice of four rides of various lengths, lunch, music, free beer and even a free massage if you want one. It's great fun, so don't miss it! Register at www.pedalandplayinparadise.com .

TEAM is currently looking for sponsors and players for its 14th Annual Golf Scramble taking place on March 23 at St. Andrews South Golf Club. If you are interested in playing or putting together a foursome, registration forms are available at St. Andrews South Golf Club (1901 Deborah Dr.) and also on TEAM's website. Thank you for your support!

Nancy Johnson is the CEO of TEAM Punta Gorda. TEAM Punta Gorda is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. Ideas or questions can be addressed to team@teampuntagorda.org or visit our website, www.teampuntagorda.org.