



Reflecting on Punta Gorda's Development

By Nancy Johnson, TEAM CEO

Development is on the table again in Punta Gorda. We can't stop it, but we can manage it. Issues such as parking, height, density, and traffic are all in the mix. We'd love to see more retail in our downtown, to give the location and merchants a shot in the arm. Retail is coming but not necessarily downtown.

Fisherman's Village, long a good partner and economic engine for this city, has a sweeping proposal with food for thought. It's nice looking, with lots of retail proposed, but there are concerns about traffic and density. City Council recently gave them a continuance until April to



present a proposal. The delay will give them time to think further about their submission. City parks should be maintained for the public good. The Fisherman's Village proposal includes the purchase of a piece of waterfront park & the adjoining harbor walk. We urge them to reconsider this part of their proposal. *(Fisherman's Village 2022 left).*

The City of Punta Gorda will publish Land Development Regulations, (LDRs), probably by autumn of this year. These regulations, which will be form based codes, determine what can and cannot be built for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile developers who want to get started before the LDR's are published are filing what is called a planned development proposal. This allows them more flexibility under the current code. Once the new form-based codes are in place, there will be architectural guidelines for each neighborhood. We were pleased to support the city in getting citizen input into the development of these codes. We would therefore hope that any developments proposed before the codes are adopted will conform to the spirit of the new regulations.



This past week at our Annual Community Meeting a capacity audience of residents and stakeholders had the opportunity to hear from Sunseeker President/COO, Micah Richins about the future of their resort over the bridge. Likely there will be interactions between Sunseeker, Fisherman's Village and the Four Points Sheraton down the road. As part of his presentation Richins pledged that as long as Sunseekers current owners are in place, there will be no casino on the property. The renderings of the

proposed resort were most impressive. *(Micah Richins pictured above left)*

Other issues under discussion right now include the development in the Jones Loop area and its impact on our city and particularly its size. Proposed roadway changes that FDOT is working on for 41 South are also in the works. FDOT representatives were here last week to hear citizens' opinions. Meanwhile, City leaders have their own post-lan priorities, such as what to do with the badly damaged Bayfront Center. We are fortunate to have good leadership in our community at this critical moment in time. Change is coming and our leaders will have their hands full managing it.

TEAM's Annual Community Meeting held at the end of January gave us a chance to thank and congratulate the Charlotte Community Foundation for its rapid and excellent disaster response. As a founding partner of COAD, Communities Active After a Disaster, we were privileged to assist CCF in getting their Volunteer Resource Center up and running very quickly and assisting the many non-profit organizations helping victims.

We plan to welcome community residents, volunteers, and friends at our next TEAM mixer at the Burg'r Bar on February 16. All are welcome. Other highly anticipated upcoming events include Pedal and Play in Paradise, our popular bicycle event being held at Laishley Pavilion on March 25. Our 18th Annual Golf Scramble at St. Andrews South Golf Club on April 8 is coming up as well and is always sold out.

Nancy Johnson is the CEO of TEAM Punta Gorda. Ideas or questions can be addressed to her at team@teampuntagorda.org. Or call 941-637-TEAM (8326). Find a complete schedule of all upcoming activities, as well as more information about TEAM Punta Gorda, membership, or to volunteer, visit our website, www.teampuntagorda.org. TEAM Punta Gorda is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.