

## Christmas luncheons

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## OUR TOWN

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# Team's plan may be city's

## Punta Gorda considers grass-rooted ideas

By **STEVE REILLY**  
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PUNTA GORDA — Team Punta Gorda's Citizen Master Plan could become a city plan.

The City Council agreed Friday to consider formally adopting Team Punta Gorda's 2005 Citizens Master Plan as a city plan. Among their strategic goals for 2008, council members want Team Punta Gorda to work with city staff before the citizens master plan comes before them for adoption.

In the wake of Hurricane Charley in 2004, Team Punta Gorda emerged as a grass-roots group that wanted to help shape the rebuilding of the city. The group raised \$200,000 to hold a five-day public workshop and to hire Jaime Correa, a noted urban planner and University of Miami Knight Professor of Community Building, to lead a team of planners and develop the master plan.

In June 2005, Roger Kress, then Team Punta Gorda's president,

presented the City Council a copy of the plan.

But on Friday, Team Punta Gorda member Bills Hughes asked the council to formally adopt the plan. He said he'd like to see the citizens plan become a road map for the city.

Many of the planning concepts within the Team Punta Gorda plan are already adopted by the city and can be found in its land-use regulations and in prior city master plans for the redevelopment of downtown. However, the

citizens plan couldn't be called a perfect fit.

"We know that certain areas need to be tweaked," Hughes told the council.

Councilwoman Marilyn Smith-Mooney said she liked the idea; however, she also would expect Team Punta Gorda to take on the responsibility and any expense to update and refine the plan.

"And if they would finance periodic updates," Smith-Mooney

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said. "People cooperate more and participate more (in planning workshops) when they know it's grassroots-(oriented) rather than government-(oriented)."

### Dry docked

The council wasn't ready

to adopt another grass-rooted idea that supported the construction of a boat dry-storage facility on city-owned waterfront land east of U.S. 41.

And at its December meeting, the city's Waterfront Development Advisory Board recommended the city look into potential locations for the dry-storage facility within

the city.

"We think there will be a great need for our residents," said Jay Buckley, a member of the waterfront advisory board. He suggested city boat owners are storing their crafts in Gasparilla and elsewhere in the county. "A great number (of Punta Gorda residents) are trailering their boats."

The council members

saw dry storage as a private-enterprise endeavor, not a city function.

However, they did like Buckley's idea for the city look into applying to the state for a submerged lands lease that would encompass most of the city's waterfront.

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