

# Work begins for the medical district

**T**eam Punta Gorda, a grass-roots organization, has been collaborating with the city and county for nearly six years. We've achieved amazing results together. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we've provided support outside of the Florida Sunshine Law and helped speed up the revitalization process by bringing other groups together in a common goal. To become a valued partner in the transformation process, Team had to earn the city and county's trust and respect.

While our name would indicate a natural concern for the City of Punta Gorda, we actually support the revitalization of our entire community.



Nancy Prafke

We believe the Board of County Commissioner's recent approval of a Port Charlotte medical district CRA is a positive step toward revitalization of a blighted area of the county and offers much long-term potential. While a CRA is operated by the government, transformation requires the involvement of the entire community. It is beyond bricks and mortar. It is cultural. As FEMA now espouses

after learning from Punta Gorda's example, no revitalization can effectively be completed in a timely manner without the integral involvement of the people.

For this reason we support and are participating in the formation of a grass-roots citizens' organization that can work in partnership with the new CRA to facilitate the renaissance of the Port Charlotte medical district. It is important to emphasize, the solution requires both parties working together as partners. From Team Punta Gorda's experience, the governmental partner can do things and have access to funding sources that the citizens do not have. Likewise, there are

resources that a nonprofit grass-roots organization can bring to the partnership, such as receiving grants from foundations, a strong volunteer corps, and expertise on project development. One of the reasons the City of Punta Gorda has been able to receive statewide recognition as a Bicycle-Friendly Community and received an award for their parks and recreation master plan was that a grass-roots organization was working in partnership on these initiatives.

We encourage Port Charlotte citizens to work together to share their vision with governmental partners and facilitate its implementation. This proposed

medical district group can become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit just like Team and partner with Charlotte County to bring about solutions that would otherwise not be possible. Team Punta Gorda is pleased to pave the way for other grass-roots citizens' organizations to help work with our governmental partners to positively influence change that benefits us all. Remember, Together Everyone Achieves More!

Team Punta Gorda is a 501(c)(3) all-volunteer, nonprofit organization whose mission is to facilitate collaboration to revitalize our community. We educate the public on the issues surrounding this process and

encourage participation. Check out our website at [www.Teampuntagorda.org](http://www.Teampuntagorda.org) to learn more. Sign up to receive our e-newsletter right on our home page. We welcome your participation on one of our many committees.

Please save the date for Team Punta Gorda's annual meeting to be held at 7 p.m., Nov. 8, at the Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association. This year's theme will be "Results through Collaboration." Keynote speaker City Manager Howard Kunik will be addressing "The Power of Partnerships." The public is welcome.

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