

Albers elected mayor in council reorganization

City Council held their annual reorganization meeting on Nov. 16. Council Members Carolyn Freeland, District 3, and Bill Albers, District 5, were sworn into office for a two-year term. Bill Albers was elected mayor and Harvey Goldberg was selected as vice mayor.



Howard Kunik

the following action:

- Approved the purchase of two small parcels of land from First Baptist Church in order to eliminate two of the bridges planned for the linear park segment from Shreve to U.S. 41. This action will result in an estimated savings of over \$100,000 in project costs. Staff will move forward with redesign and bidding the entire linear park from Olympia to U.S. 41.
- Agreed to consider fair share impact fee adjustments for parks and roads based on vehicle miles of travel methodology (fully tested and validated in the state) and a rate structure that will bring in projected revenues (\$448,000 over the next five years) equal to a complete streets/population and jobs methodology (innovative approach tailored

to a community such as Punta Gorda but not court validated). Under the recommended rate structure, projected impact fee revenues amount to 3.5 percent of estimated capital improvements projects costs through 2016. The consultant, Clarion Associates, will develop the fee schedule and present it at the Dec. 14 council meeting prior to initiation of an ordinance public hearing process.

- Approved initiation of a Punta Gorda Citizens Academy in collaboration with the Punta Gorda Chamber. Council Member Freeland, staff and chamber members will develop the program and advertise for participants in the near future.

- Directed that staff obtain input from the business community and neighborhood representatives regarding future use of the former Public Works/Utilities site off West Henry and Shreve. Staff will bring information back to Council prior to discuss timing and criteria for future

disposition of the 17+/- acres.

New entrepreneurs

Punta Gorda Entrepreneurial Academy, sponsored by the city and Punta Gorda Chamber, graduated 12 business entrepreneurs upon completion of workshops in such areas as marketing, financing, bookkeeping, planning and management. City Council members were in attendance.

younger demographic as an additional component of an overall economic development strategy. Mayor Albers, Vice Mayor Goldberg, Council Member Kee-sling, growth management department staff and I were all in attendance.

Holiday observance

City offices will be closed on Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. Residents will notice NO change in trash or yard waste collection; however, recycling collection *will* be delayed by a day.

Beautification awards

The Historic Preservation Advisory Board is now accepting applications for its inaugural awards, which recognize beautification efforts of property owners in the Community Redevelopment Area (roughly the area west of Cooper Street, north of Henry Street, east of Maud Street and

south of the harbor). The application deadline is Jan. 31, 2012. Applications are available online at http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/depts/growthmgmt/board_historic.html.

NEP grant

Staff worked with residents in the Burnt Store Villas Homeowners Association (BSVHOA) to obtain a Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program microgrant to begin a phased cleanup, exotic removal and mangrove trimming project. Several BSVHOA residents are developing the timeline to begin Phase I — The Clean-Up Phase.

The grant is for \$250 which will help defray the costs of silt fence, stakes, survey tape, and hand saws. Cleanup is expected to be completed before March 2012.

The group is also going to apply for a public outreach grant in 2012 for \$5,000 to complete the second phase of the project.

Howard Kunik is the Punta Gorda city manager.

Trail deal

City Council approved two agreements with the Florida Department of Transportation, which will pave the way for completion of the multi-use recreational trail along U.S. 41 from Airport to Aquí Esta and Monaco to Taylor. The first agreement (\$223,605) relocates lights in the way of the path, and the second one (\$719,255) pays for the construction of the trail. Light relocation and trail construction are being paid for by FDOT and anticipated to start during the first quarter of 2012.

Council actions

At its Nov. 16 meeting, Council also took

TPG meeting

Team Punta Gorda held its annual meeting at which attendees received a presentation from the consulting firm Moran, Stahl & Boyer regarding the future direction of economic development in the Punta Gorda area. The bottom-line question to be addressed in the city's future strategic plans is whether we want to remain solely a retirement-oriented community and focus our attention on that priority or whether we should broaden our appeal to include a