



## TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA SPECIAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 29, 2023 – 9:00 A.M.

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

4300 S. ATLANTIC AVENUE, PONCE INLET, FL

**SUNSHINE LAW NOTICE FOR BOARD MEMBERS – Notice is hereby provided that one or more members of the Town’s various boards may attend and speak at this meeting.**

1. Call to Order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call.
4. Ratification of employment offer for Planning & Development Director position.
5. Adjournment.

*If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Town Council with respect to any matter considered at a meeting or hearing, he/she will need a record of the proceedings and that for such purpose, he/she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Persons who require an accommodation in order to attend this meeting should contact the Ponce Inlet Town Hall at 236-2150 **prior to the meeting** in order to request such assistance.*

**A complete copy of the materials for this agenda is available at Town Hall.**



**MEMORANDUM**  
**TOWN OF PONCE INLET – OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER**

*THE TOWN OF PONCE INLET STAFF SHALL BE PROFESSIONAL, CARING, AND FAIR IN DELIVERING COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE WHILE ENSURING PONCE INLET CITIZENS OBTAIN THE GREATEST VALUE FOR THEIR TAX DOLLAR.*

**TO:** Town Council  
**FROM:** Michael E. Disher, AICP, Town Manager  
**DATE:** November 20, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Ratification of employment offer to Darren Lear, AICP, for the position of Planning & Development Director

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The Planning & Development Director position has been vacant officially since April 2023, when the Town Council approved my contract for the position of Town Manager. Previous to that, I had served as both Interim Town Manager and Planning & Development Director after former Town Manager Jeaneen Witt resigned effective October 2022. It has now been over one year since the Department has had a full-time Director.

The Town began advertising for the Planning & Development Director position on May 1<sup>st</sup>. An interview committee was created that included Human Resources Director/Town Clerk Kim Cherbano, Chief Building Official Hank Baker, Code Compliance Manager David Hooker, Office Manager Ami Pierce, Senior Planner Patty Rippey, and me as Town Manager. Interviews were conducted with two candidates in June. Although these candidates had noteworthy resumes, the committee did not believe them to be the right fit for Ponce Inlet.

Positions in the planning and development field have historically been difficult to fill. Such positions are in high demand in Florida due to its rapidly growing population and number of open positions needed to meet this demand. In an attempt to attract more qualified candidates, the position was re-advertised on September 1<sup>st</sup>, this time with a signing bonus. The committee interviewed Mr. Lear on October 13<sup>th</sup>. A thorough pre-employment screening process then followed, in accordance with the Town's policy for hiring a department head position.

Mr. Lear has extensive experience in this field, having served as the Development Services Director for the City of Edgewater since 2005. Prior to that, he worked there first as a Planning Technician, then as Chief Planner. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky, and obtained his planning certificate from the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) in 2005. Mr. Lear's professional references include his two former supervisors, the previous and current City Managers of

Edgewater, both of whom were extremely complimentary of Mr. Lear's capability, work ethic, communication skills, and teamwork.

The Planning & Development Department has a number of significant planning projects that have been on hold pending the hiring of a new Director and a Principal Planner (vacant since June 1). We continue to see record-breaking building permitting, much of which also requires planning review. With the planning vacancies in neighboring jurisdictions, we know that bringing the department to full staff levels will continue to be a challenge.

It is for these reasons that I am excited to recommend the appointment of Mr. Lear for the Planning & Development Director position. Mr. Lear has been given an employment offer contingent upon the Town Council's approval. The offer includes a signing bonus conditioned on a 24-month employment contract. Mr. Lear will be attending the Town Council's special meeting scheduled for Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. for consideration of his appointment to this position.

Attachments:

Employment offer letter

Mr. Lear's application for employment

Pre-employment screening report



# Town of Ponce Inlet

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4300 South Atlantic Avenue  
Ponce Inlet, Florida 32127  
Phone: (386) 236-2150  
Fax: (386) 322-6717  
[www.ponce-inlet.org](http://www.ponce-inlet.org)

November 7, 2023

Mr. Darren T. Lear  
6006 Whispering Trees Lane  
Port Orange, FL 32128

Dear Mr. Lear:

It is my pleasure to provide you with a contingent offer of employment with the Town of Ponce Inlet for the position of Planning & Development Director. As a department head position, this offer of employment is subject to final approval by the Ponce Inlet Town Council and your pre-employment physical.

Your annual salary will begin at \$105,000, plus a one-time signing bonus of \$7,500 in accordance with the signing bonus agreement provided to you. You will also be eligible for annual increases based upon the Town Council's budget allocation.

This position is classified as an exempt position. You will be entitled to all the benefits afforded to other Town exempt employees in accordance with our Employee Rules, Regulations and Benefits handbook. These are currently 100% paid by the Town for the employee, including a health insurance premium plan, dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, long-term and short-term disability insurance, an Employee Assistance Program, a retirement plan via the Florida Retirement System (subject to state mandated 3% employee contribution), as well as a \$3,900 per year vehicle allowance. As a department head and exempt employee, the starting point for your personal leave accrual will be at the 6<sup>th</sup> year accrual level, entitling you to 192 hours per year of personal leave for your first five years of service, increasing thereafter.

The position requires attendance at evening meetings, with the understanding that you will not be compensated for any hours above forty (40) per week which will be required from time to time. However, as an exempt employee, you will be entitled to administrative leave of 40 hours per fiscal year, granted pro rata for your first year.

Your start date will be **Monday, December 4, 2023**, if your appointment is ratified by the Ponce Inlet Town Council. The Town Council meeting for this ratification is **Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.** You are expected to attend this meeting.

Please sign below to accept this offer and return this to my attention. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at 386-236-2183.

*The Town of Ponce Inlet staff shall be professional, caring, and fair in delivering community excellence while ensuring Ponce Inlet citizens obtain the greatest value for their tax dollar.*

Darren Lear Employment Offer

Sincerely,



\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael E. Disher, Town Manager

Offer accepted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## 22-00015 - Planning &amp; Development Director - OPEN UNTIL FILLED.

**Contact Information -- Person ID: 55337460**

Name: Darren Lear Address: 6006 Whispering Trees Lane  
Port Orange, Florida 32128  
US

Home Phone: 386-547-3279 Alternate Phone:

Email: dogscore1@gmail.com Notification Email  
Preference:

Former Last Name:

**Personal Information**

Driver's License: Yes, Class E

What is your highest level of education? Bachelor's Degree

**Preferences**

Minimum Compensation:

Are you willing to relocate?

Types of positions you will accept:

Types of work you will accept:

Types of shifts you will accept:

**Education**

**College/University**  
University of Kentucky  
<https://www.uky.edu/>  
-  
Lexington, Kentucky

Did you graduate: Yes  
Major/Minor: Bachelor of Arts  
Units Completed: 10 Semester  
Degree Received: Bachelor's

**Work Experience**

**Development Services Director**  
1/2005 - 5/2023

City of Edgewater  
cityofedgewater.org  
104 N, Riverside Drive  
Edgewater, Florida 32132  
386-424-2400

Hours worked per week: 40  
Monthly Salary: \$1.00  
# of Employees Supervised: 8  
Name of Supervisor: Glenn Irby - City Manager  
May we contact this employer? Yes

**Duties**

- \* Responsible for the management of the Development Services Department (Planning/Zoning and Building divisions) and for the development and administration of the community planning and building program for the City.
- \* Supervise departmental personnel which involves such duties as selecting and allocating employees, reviewing and assigning work, training, maintaining standards, acting on employee issues, providing counseling/ discipline, appraising performance, and recommending promotion, demotions, terminations and salary actions.
- \* Plan, direct and coordinate the administration of the departmental activities.
- \* Responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of the City codes, ordinances and policies \*as they relate to the development of land and buildings within the City.
- \* Responsible for engineering projects and consultant, coordination related to planning and development as assigned by the City Manager. Review site plans, subdivisions, annexations, conditional use permits, variance requests, development agreements, zoning text amendments, comprehensive plan amendments and rezoning requests.
- \* Research, analyze and recommend changes to ordinances, land development regulations and present said recommendations to City Council and various boards.
- \* Responsible for the compilation, development and management of comprehensive planning and

- \* Supervises the issuance and maintenance of building permits and occupational licenses.
- \* Coordinate and consult on all geographic information systems.
- \* Prepare the annual department budget for submission to the City Manager and approval by City Council; monitor departmental budget and operate department within said budget.

### Reason for Leaving

Contract paid out.

### Chief Planner

11/2001 - 1/2005

City of Edgewater  
cityofedgewater.org  
104 N, Riverside Drive  
Edgewater, Florida 32132  
386-424-2400

Hours worked per week: 40  
Monthly Salary: \$1.00  
# of Employees Supervised: 3  
Name of Supervisor: Ken Hooper - City Manager  
May we contact this employer? Yes

### Duties

- \* Responsible for the management of the Planning Department and the development and administration of the community planning program for the City.
- \* Supervise departmental personnel which involves such duties as selecting and allocating employees, reviewing and assigning work, training, maintaining standards, acting on employee issues, providing counseling/ discipline, appraising performance, and recommending promotion, demotions, terminations and salary actions.
- \* Plan, direct and coordinate the administration of the departmental activities.
- \* Responsible for engineering projects and consultant, coordination related to planning and development as assigned by the City Manager. Review site plans, subdivisions, annexations, conditional use permits, variance requests, development agreements, zoning text amendments, comprehensive plan amendments and rezoning requests.
- \* Responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of the City codes, ordinances and policies as they relate to the development of land and buildings within the City.
- \* Coordinate and consult on all geographic information systems.
- \* Prepare the annual department budget for submission to the City Manager and approval by City Council; monitor departmental budget and operate department within said budget.
- \* Prepare the annual department budget for submission to the City Manager and approval by City Council; monitor departmental budget and operate department within said budget.

### Reason for Leaving

Promotion

### Planning Technician

8/1999 - 11/2001

City of Edgewater  
cityofedgewater.org  
104 N. Riverside Drive  
Edgewater, Florida 32132  
386-424-2400

Hours worked per week: 40  
Monthly Salary: \$1.00  
# of Employees Supervised: 0  
Name of Supervisor: Lynne Plaskett - Planning Director  
May we contact this employer? Yes

### Duties

City of Edgewater -----

- \* Provide information and guidance relating to planning and zoning of property within the City.
- \* Assist with a variety of long-range planning activities associated with the City's comprehensive plan.
- \* Review, research assorted surveys and plats, deeds and covenants and conduct on-site inspections as needed.
- \* Prepare and coordinate special projects, including but not limited to; graphics, records, documents, updates to zoning and land use maps and other maps and charts.
- \* Assist in the production, maintenance and distribution of amendments to the land development code, comprehensive plan and geographical information systems.
- \* Review site plans, subdivision and land development regulations and various planning and zoning requests as assigned by the Chief Planner/Director.
- \* Review various applications for completeness, perform necessary research and maintain

documentation as required for the Planning and Zoning Board.

**Reason for Leaving**

Promotion

**Digital Cartographer**

10/1998 - 8/1999

Voyager Map Enterprises  
Ormond Beach  
Ormond Beach, Florida 32174  
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Hours worked per week: 40  
Monthly Salary: \$1.00  
# of Employees Supervised: 0  
Name of Supervisor: Jack Croasmun - Owner  
May we contact this employer? Yes

**Duties**

\* Research and digital production for wall maps and atlas-based maps for sale to the public.  
Cartographer

Rand McNally Daytona Beach, FL

\* Research and cartographic production of wall maps, folding maps, atlas maps, etc. for purchase by the public.

**Reason for Leaving**

New Job

**Certificates and Licenses**

Type: AICP  
Number: 150231  
Issued by: American Planning Association  
Date Issued: 1 /2005 Date Expires: 6 /2024

**Skills**

Office Skills  
Typing:  
Data Entry:

**Additional Information**

**References**

Professional  
**Barlow, Tracey**  
Real Estate Agent  
386-566-3175

**Resume**

**Text Resume**

**Attachments**

Attachment	File Name	File Type	Created By
Authorization.pdf	Authorization.pdf	Background Authorization Form	Job Seeker
License.pdf	License.pdf	Driver License	Job Seeker
References.pdf	References.pdf	Personal References	Job Seeker

**Agency-Wide Questions**

1. Q: Do you have any relatives working here?

A: No



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**2. Q:** Are you claiming Veterans Preference?

A: No

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**3. Q:** If eligible, which Veterans Preference category are you claiming? Note: if you are claiming Veterans' Preference, you "Must" submit a furnished a DD 214.

A:

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**4. Q:** Have you ever been convicted of a Felony or First-Degree Misdemeanor?

A: No

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**5. Q:** Where did you first hear about this opportunity?

A: Friend



Background Investigation

Applicant: Planning Director Applicant Darren Lear

Investigated By: Investigator Scott Gaston

On October 13, 2023 I was assigned this background check:

The following areas were examined in the investigation:

1. Criminal History
2. Education
3. Driver's License
4. Previous Employment History
5. Military History
6. References
7. Social Media

Applicant Daren T. Lear was born on November 11, 1970. The applicant lives in Port Orange, Florida at 6006 Whispering Trees Lane. His Social Security number is 404-29-5282.

#### **Criminal History Check**

An Inquiry of National Crime Information Center and Florida Crime Information Center as well as the Volusia County Criminal Information Services do not indicate any criminal history. "Finder" indicates no activity to be concerned with.

#### **Education**

The applicant graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

#### **Driving History**

The applicant has a valid Florida Driver's License. His Driver's license number is L600-178-70-414-0 and it expires on 11/14/2025. It is a Class E Operators with a restriction of corrective lenses.

\*No negative driving history issues discovered

### **Military Service**

The applicant did not serve in the United States Military.

### **Previous Employment History**

City of Edgewater, Florida

8/1999-5/2023

*Planning Technician, Chief Planner, Development Services Director*

I reviewed the applicant personnel file at the City of Edgewater. The applicant moved up the ranks within the City of Edgewater and his file indicates he performed well in every position he was in. The applicant had no disciplinary records in his personnel file or complaints from residents or fellow employees.

### **Professional References**

The following were interviewed regarding the applicant:

Tracy Barlow 386-566-3715

Glenn Storch 386-238-8383

Michael Garrett 386-566-3073

Glenn Irby 386-424-2400

The professional references indicate that the applicant is very professional and knowledgeable. Some of the main characteristics that stood out was the applicant's ability to lead without micromanaging. The references indicated he was very supportive of his staff. The references also indicated he was well respected by the community while employed with the City of Edgewater.

### **Personal References**

Paul Serafimoff	386-481-8523
Andy Machel	386-689-8719
Russ Kuttikum	248-766-7089

I was able to speak with Paul Serafimoff and Andy Mache. They have both known the applicant for over 10 years through youth activities. They describe the applicant as being well liked and very easy-going. They also indicate that they have never seen him act inappropriately at youth events or at any other time.

### **Social Media**

The applicant has no inappropriate material on social media.

### **Conclusion**

There is nothing in the applicant's past that would disqualify him from working in the Township of Ponce Inlet. The applicant appears to be a well-rounded individual that gets along well with others and has a positive attitude. The applicant has worked in the field of the position he has applied for and appears to have the qualifications and experience to be an excellent employee for the Township of Ponce Inlet.