

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-7
August 27, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Human Resource Director, Karla Green

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-7 [2:42:11 p.m.]

A discussion regarding incentives to certain employees receiving a car allowance who chose electric vehicles. (Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Vice Mayor Lago.

Vice Mayor Lago: Alright, this is a quick one. I was looking over, obviously in an effort to always try to be as sustainable as possible. I was looking over at all the electric vehicles that are rolling out, affordable electric vehicles that are rolling out, not only fully electric, but also hybrids. And I know that a certain portion of our employees in the City of Coral Gables have car stipends and I think its important, as a driver of a 100 percent electric vehicle that we provide, I want to incentivize it. I don't want to force it on anybody. I know that people have leases, I know people bought cars, but I want people who are coming up, who are employees who are coming up for new leases or to potentially buy a new car that they consider buying a hybrid or buying a fully electric vehicle. The reason why is, we have the largest electric car fleet of any city, county and in the State

City Commission Meeting
August 27, 2019

of Florida, and I think we are moving in that direction. We are always talking about sustainability and environmental stewardship. I just want to incentivize. I don't want to penalize anybody.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let me bring a point up. If we achieve 100 percent incentives and 100 percent of our police have electric vehicles, and Hurricane Irma comes along and the electricity is off for two weeks, then we don't get...because they can't get to work.

Vice Mayor Lago: Listen, I'm not saying you're wrong, but that's why I said hybrids. You can buy a hybrid vehicle, which again has gas and has electric. I think its day and age today with the technology that we have, it will only benefit the residents. We'll incentivize it for them to get an electric car. I'd love for Matt to get up here. These individuals that are driving their vehicles to work, they would save money on gas. I save between \$150 to \$200 a month, that would be your money. Not asking you to give it back to the City of Coral Gables. Billy, our Clerk, has a 100 percent electric vehicle, and I've asked them before, and I hate to put them on the spot, I think he's very happy with the electric vehicle. I don't think he'll ever go back to the combustion engine. Will you go back to the combustion engine?

City Clerk Urquia: Never.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, he enjoys the aspect of the electric vehicle. I just want to put up money where our mouth is and I think its important, especially since we're spending taxpayer dollars as car stipends, I think its an opportunity. What do you think Matt?

Mr. Anderson: I think to the Vice Mayor's point too, with the extended range electric vehicles now getting 200-250 miles to a charge, it reduces that anxiety of being able to run out of the charge, as opposed to it later.

Commissioner Keon: How many people get...

Vice Mayor Lago: Its about \$18,000 a month, right, car allowances, I understand. She has it there. I don't have the document in front of me.

Human Resource Director Green: So, 38 employees receive car allowance and the total yearly, I don't know if you wanted to know that is \$211,153.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, it's about \$18,000 a month. It ranges from a few hundred dollars up to about \$703. Its not only a car allowance; you are talking about car allowance, car payment, the insurance,

the gas. So, if you get an electric vehicle you are going to save yourself \$150 to \$200 a month in that cost. If you get an electric vehicle you don't have to pay for gas.

Commissioner Keon: We pay the gas.

City Attorney Ramos: Included in the car allowance amount.

Human Resource Director Green: There are three tiers of car allowances; there is a tier for directors, that being \$500 net; there is a tier for assistant directors that's \$300 net; and then there is a few directors that are assigned by the City Manager to do special projects, those are \$650. I'm sorry?

Commissioner Keon: Do they use the car...

Human Resource Director Green: They use it for everything, to go around the City, coming to Commission, anywhere, with their own gas and everything. They just get the allowance monthly pretty much.

Vice Mayor Lago: I think we need to be, I looked at some of those numbers too, I think we need to be very cognizant of those dollars, those dollars also that we are spending there. So, it goes to the simple fact of, if you get an electric vehicle and you are saving \$150, \$200 a month in gas, either the employee keeps it as a bonus, or the City gets it back. But I think we need to put our money where our mouth is and lead by example and not just continue purchasing all these vehicles. I think it could be something beneficial to us.

Commissioner Keon: So, we'll limit the allowance only to people that have, that are willing to buy an electric car?

Vice Mayor Lago: I brought it up to hear your ideas, everybody's ideas. Let me tell you. I'm willing to incentivize people who go out and get an electric vehicle, but I want the Manager, like we were talking about before, hey listen, we are having issues finding \$260,000 to offer trolley service on a Saturday, let's be careful how we are giving away car allowances, because we are giving away \$200 and something thousand dollars a year. Let's be cognizant of that.

Commissioner Keon: [Inaudible]

Vice Mayor Lago: I wanted to bring it to your attention because I got it brought to my attention and I think its something that we could work on.

City Commission Meeting
August 27, 2019

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's hope that Irma doesn't come.

Vice Mayor Lago: You can charge your car at my house.

[End: 2:47:38 p.m.]

[Note: Item was resumed at 2:55:33 p.m.]

Vice Mayor Lago: Can you put on the record. Who is going to be addressing the issue of the fuel-efficient vehicles, the one that I mentioned before? Are we going to be working on that? The issue of the fuel-efficient vehicles.

City Attorney Ramos: There was no motion. There was no motion.

Vice Mayor Lago: OK. I just wanted to add some information that somebody just sent me. That members of Congress only get their leases paid by Congress if the vehicle is a fuel-efficient vehicle on an approved list. So, I want somebody to look into that for me, because if that's the case, and we are spending \$200 plus thousand dollars. If Congress is doing it which is not very efficient, Coral Gables should be.

City Attorney Ramos: We'll bring that back next time.

Vice Mayor Lago: I just want somebody to make sure that...

City Attorney Ramos: Bring the research back.

Vice Mayor Lago: Research and make sure that if that's the case, moving forward I want to head in that direction with the approval of the Commission please.