

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-7
March 12, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
Assistant City Attorney, Gus Ceballos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-7 [9:46:14 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, by amending Article 5, "Development Standards," Section 5-1409, "Amount of required parking," increasing the number of parking charging station under certain circumstances; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date. (02 13 19 PZB recommended approval, Vote 4-1) (Revise existing electric vehicle charging requirements)
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: F-7, ordinance on first reading.

City Attorney Ramos: F-7 is an ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, by amending Article 5, "Development Standards," Section 5-1409, "Amount of required parking," increasing the number of parking charging station under certain circumstances; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date. This is a public hearing item. Mr. Ceballos.

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: Good morning, Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners. Assistant City Attorney Gus Ceballos. Before you is a revision to the existing electrical vehicle charging requirements in the Code. We had originally spoken about this a few meetings ago. I took the instructions from the Board and this is the changes that we are proposing. Originally, the existing Code requires a 2 percent with an EV -- anything over 20 residential prop -- in residential units requires 2 percent of the parking spaces be reserved for electric vehicle parking. That's with an existing charging station being installed. The new proposal will add two additional requirements. Basically, after the initial 2 percent, 3 percent will be what's called EV ready. EV ready will have all of the required conduits, electrical equipment. Everything's ready to go. The only thing that's missing is basically somebody coming along and installing a charging station directly on that location. In addition to that 3 percent requirement, we have a 15 percent requirement for EV capable. EV capable means the groundwork has been done. The conduits have been run. The space has been allocated in the vault box. All the initial work has been done. The only thing that needs to be done, conduits need to be run for the final actual installation of an EV charging station. This was presented before our Planning and Zoning Board. I don't know if Mr. Trias would like to...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. The Planning and Zoning Board reviewed this and they combined all of the different categories that we have into one. Basically, they added up everything to 18 percent EV ready. However, staff continues to recommend the original proposal, which has those three categories because it's more likely that it will be enforced effectively.

Vice Mayor Lago: Okay. Mayor, if I may.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: You know, this is a pretty simple ordinance. I don't need to go in too much depth on it. We've already discussed this in detail. I think the key discussion here is about EV capability. And as an electric car charger -- as an electric car user in my home, I've seen the benefits of it immensely. Not only in reference to the amount of money I'm saving in gas on a monthly basis, but just the simplicity of using an electric vehicle. As you see more and more on the streets every single day, you're seeing electric vehicles. We're transitioning to this mode of transportation. It's a matter of time. The research that I've done, as I've mentioned before, all the different car model advocates are moving in that direction and they're moving in that direction aggressively. Volvo, BMW, Porsche, Tesla, obviously, is, you know, laying the foundation here. But this is going to be not only the present, but it's going to be the future for a long time to come. So, I think that we're going to be, you know, putting ourselves in an EV capable. I would have liked to have seen a little bit more aggressive stance in regards to EV ready, but I'm willing to accept...

Commissioner Quesada: What's...

Vice Mayor Lago: The 15...

Commissioner Quesada: What's the -- remind me of the difference, EV ready, EV capable? I'm sorry.

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: EV ready basically has more work completed.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: EV ready basically has...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's more expensive to install.

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: Basically, the breakers are in the vault box. The wires...

Commissioner Quesada: What's the price difference? Do we know?

Commissioner Keon: A lot.

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: There has been different discussion. I believe the hard number that we had come...

Commissioner Quesada: The ballpark.

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: Was roughly between 2 percent and 4 percent of the parking pedestal is what I believe we discussed. So, the actual parking structure of whatever building, not the entire cost of the construction of the building, just the parking aspect.

Vice Mayor Lago: Just the...

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: 2 percent is roughly what they came to for an EV capable, and 4 percent would be EV ready. As the Director mentioned, the Planning and Zoning Board requested to eliminate the EV capable completely.

Vice Mayor Lago: And that...

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: And basically, just tie everything into EV ready.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, the numbers are not a lot. I mean, it's money, so obviously...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: A developer has to pay for it and we want to be sensitive. And I think the Mayor brought that up at the last -- when we had this discussion probably about, I don't know, three or four months ago. But I think that this is an amenity that's going to see -- that's going to provide significant value to a developer who is, number one, selling an apartment or renting an apartment or renting a commercial space because people are moving in this direction.

Commissioner Quesada: I'm just...

Vice Mayor Lago: And people are going to...

Commissioner Quesada: I'm honestly concerned that...

Vice Mayor Lago: People are going to make...

Commissioner Quesada: It's not enough.

Vice Mayor Lago: But that's what I said.

Commissioner Quesada: Just because...

Vice Mayor Lago: But I mean, I don't...

Commissioner Quesada: If you look at...

Vice Mayor Lago: I...

Commissioner Quesada: It's funny because -- and the only reason I know this is because I've been -- my lease is coming up on my car and I've been looking. And it seems like every major car manufacturer has two or three electric vehicles coming out later this year. So, it just seems like in the next ten to fifteen years, maybe 50 percent of all the cars in the street are electric.

Commissioner Mena: So, here's the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, but...

Commissioner Mena: Here's the thing with that. I think that this has the difficult part of the sort of...

Vice Mayor Lago: Completed. That's where I was going to go.

Commissioner Mena: Infrastructure done.

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: So, if the market then dictates, to your point...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Then you could run the conduit.

Commissioner Mena: That they need more space, they can very easily do it at that point...

Commissioner Quesada: Okay.

Commissioner Mena: And adjust.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And I'm very much...

Commissioner Mena: The -- yeah.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: For...

City Manager Iglesias: If I may say. The biggest issue with an existing building to get something done is accessing one side to another. So, if you have a physical space on the transformer vault, if you have all the conduit done, then it's much, much simpler just to run conductors through to get that done than physically getting conduit and everything. So, that's the most...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

City Manager Iglesias: Difficult part in construction.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'd like to make a comment on this. And my philosophy is that market driven forces -- market driven solutions are the ones that work because that's what the market demands. And when developers see that if they don't have 50 percent of the stations EV ready, they're not going to be able to sell the apartments and they're going to make them.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And I would rather see that and have that than have requirements or common-sense solutions, I guess, imposed by governments. I am very much to getting government out of the lives of people. And I agree that this is where the future is coming, but I'd rather see the developers doing it by themselves and not have the government impose it on them. I'm very

much for this as it is because it makes common sense. But I would be against increasing the demand.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, two points. Two points to the Mayor's comments. Number one, we have a LEED ordinance in place, which is legislation that I wrote as -- and this Commission adopted.

City Manager Iglesias: LEED silver.

Vice Mayor Lago: And that's going to play a significant role in obviously making it easier for electric car users to be able to, you know, meet that service that they required; so, number one. But by being EV capable and having your vault box, you know, be up to par to what potentially could be that increase in electric cars, that's the biggest step, like Commissioner Mena mentioned. I mean, that is the biggest step. Now, would I love to see somebody who comes in and rents an apartment for, say -- in a downtown development and they can just literally go in and plug their car? Yeah, that'd be great. But right now there isn't that demand.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Right.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I think the developers, as they see more and more people coming in and the question has to be asked, do you offer immediate electric charging stations for my car.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And they will do it.

Vice Mayor Lago: And then they're obviously going to move in that direction. They see the value in there. They see that people are looking for a more affordable and a, you know, more sustainable way of travel. So, it'll come. It'll come, but my biggest concern was not having the volts, the necessary juice there to meet the demands over the next five or ten years. If all it takes is a person who's coming in with an electric car to say, okay, I want to run the conduit and I want to install my charging station, you can do that for, you know, a few thousand dollars. It's not something...

Commissioner Quesada: Okay.

Vice Mayor Lago: Crazy. But to upgrade the vault is at another level.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do you make a motion?

City Manager Iglesias: And let me say that if you -- if you do this smart, you could almost double the 18 percent to 60 -- to 36 percent with the same infrastructure. So, if they -- so that you can bring something in between two vehicles, make a slightly larger conduit so this can be done if it's -- if the developer's looking at the future with minor cost to take care of 36 percent instead of 18 percent of the vehicles.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: One minor housekeeping item. To remove any ambiguity or open to interpretation, we're going to add in additional language to F-2 and F-3 that basically says that these requirements are in addition to F-1 so that no one tries to interpret it as only 3 percent or only 2 percent or only 15 percent but that these compound and they are all together.

Vice Mayor Lago: I'll make a motion.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do I have a second? Will you call the roll, please?

City Clerk Urquia: Commissioner Quesada?

City Attorney Ramos: This is a public hearing item.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This is a public hearing. Anybody from the public wishes to speak? Will you call the roll, please?

Commissioner Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.