



PLANNING COMMISSION SYNOPSIS

Thursday, August 08, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Bennett called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:30 PM in the City Council Chambers of the Bloomington Civic Plaza.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bennett, Goodrum, Solberg, Goltzman, Korman, Rohman, Albrecht

STAFF PRESENT: Markegard, Centinario, Johnson, Palermo, O'Day

ITEM 4

8:06 p.m.

CASE: PL2019-111

APPLICANT: City of Bloomington

REQUEST: City Code Amendment for Electric Vehicle Charging Standards

SPEAKING FROM THE PUBLIC:

Joe Strommen, 10315 Thomas Avenue S, Bloomington, MN 55431

PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION:

Palermo provided background and terminology on Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging standards. The proposed ordinance envisions two use types for EV charging – either as incidental to another use or as a stand-alone convenience facility with fuel sales. The design requirements for incidental chargers would be the following: the charger must be located in a parking island or mounted to an adjacent structure, it must be protected by bollards, structure or curb and must not encroach on minimum sidewalk width. Incidental chargers would be permitted in all zoning districts. Chargers in the residential zoning districts must be located within the garage or mounted on a pole that meets the principal building setback. If the charger is located outside the garage, it must be rated for outside use.

If the EV charging station is the principal use, the following would be required: 40 foot front building setback, 35 foot setback for pump island and alternative fuel station, interior curb, 120 foot lot width, and 20 foot setback for canopies. The standards for truck and trailer rental and the restriction on food sales to 25% of floor area were removed from the ordinance. In addition, above ground storage tanks would become prohibited.

Question: Should EV Chargers be required for multi-family development? After the study session, there was a consensus to not require EV chargers with new multi-family residential projects. The majority of the charging would occur at night and the cost of one charger would be roughly \$2,000. One resident expressed support of the EV

charging standards, specifically for requiring them with multi-family residential developments.

Rohman stated the proposed number of spaces required would be 1 space per 50 units. Is there a minimum number of spaces proposed?

Markegard stated the thought was to include 1 space if it is under 50 units and then an additional space once there is 51 units.

Rohman stated he would support a minimum requirement for multi-family residential. Is there a minimum standard for incidental level 2 chargers?

Palermo said staff did not include a minimum standard. There could be a prohibition on level 3 charging in residential. To count toward parking, the charge must be at least level 2.

Rohman asked if there was discussion on different setbacks for varying types of charging at fueling stations.

Palermo stated the proposed 35 foot setback would be for pump islands, not for EV charging. Alternative fuels include biodiesel, hydrogen, natural gas, ethanol and propane.

Goltzman asked if screening is required for parking lot spaces.

Palermo stated the current Code requires parking lot screening.

Albrecht asked if the standards would address alternative sources for energy.

Palermo stated the solar energy Code was recently updated to promote alternative sources of energy.

Albrecht asked if there is discussion to include the standards in the Opportunity Housing Ordinance.

Markegard stated requiring the chargers will add to the cost of a multi-family project. Promoting affordable housing and promoting EV use are competing objectives. There will be further discussion and information on this at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Goodrum observed a photo in the slideshow that displays an EV charger that blocks the sidewalk. He asked about the impact to drive aisles.

Palermo stated the sidewalk must maintain a five foot clearance. In the pre-application stage, staff would discuss design requirements and best location.

Bennett asked what the minimum number of units is to qualify as multi-family.

Markegard stated three units in one building would qualify as multi-family. However, few very small projects are developed. In recent years, the smallest multi-family project was a 42-unit apartment building.

Solberg asked about the definition of accessory and a duplex.

Markegard stated two-family is not considered multi-family. Townhomes are defined separately so townhomes would not have to meet requirements for multi-family.

Joe Strommen stated EV technology is changing and the cost is decreasing. The cost to install a charger is variable, but a big way to cut down cost is to build it with new parking projects. At some point in the near future, EVs will be more affordable than internal combustion engine so having EV infrastructure, especially in residential is important. He suggested to follow St. Louis Park's minimum standard of 10% of designated spaces for EV charging. In addition, he suggested to require appropriate electrical capacity for single family residential garages when they are newly built. For commercial properties, staff could consider EV readiness by laying conduit for future EV charging. The only way to meet carbon footprint is to make EV charging available and visible to the community.

The public hearing was closed via a motion.

Goltzman stated Bloomington is moving in the right direction with this ordinance. She appreciated the options of convenience for customers while the EVs are charging. She suggested to evaluate and review EV charging with trucks and large trailers.

Goodrum stated installing chargers at multi-family should be based on market demand, and not Code driven. He encouraged the City to start smaller. In Washington DC, he noticed unused charging spaces near the entrance, which pushed the other spaces further away.

Rohman stated he supports having a minimum for multi-family. Retrofitting after-the-fact will be more expensive and take longer. He provided the Lunds and Bylerly's in Edina as a good example of EV charging. The proposed ordinance is a good start.

Bennett stated she agrees about considering trucks and RV charging. She is mixed on requiring charging with multi-family – she understands it could be market driven and understands developers may want to reduce the costs. She suggests having a minimum for new multi-family development considering the low cost of installing the chargers. She is not in favor of requiring the chargers for single-family residential.

Solberg stated the minimum must be tied to a percentage of a remodel. He does not support requiring the chargers for new units. He is opposed to laying down conduit for commercial properties as it could be in the improper location or poorly installed.

Bennett asked the Commission on the input between laying conduit or requiring to install.

Goodrum stated he recollected the Commission not requiring charging due to changing technology and decreasing costs of the charging.

Rohman stated the two key priorities for charging is the place of residence and fast charging. EV charging at a grocery store is not a game-changer for electric vehicles.

The item continues to the August 29, 2019 Planning Commission meeting.

ACTIONS OF THE COMMISSION:

M/Rohman, S/Solberg: To close the public hearing. Motion carried 7-0.

M/Goltzman, S/Goodrum: In PL2019-111, I move to continue the item to the August 29, 2019 Planning Commission meeting.
Motion carried 7-0.