

BANKING/ FINANCE

Controversial Solar Changes Going to Florida Governor

by Jim Saunders

The Florida Senate gave final approval to a bill that would make major changes in rules for rooftop solar energy, after weeks of attempts by the solar industry and environmental groups to head it off.

Senate sponsor Jennifer Bradley, R-Fleming Island, said the current system is “regressive,” as it leads to the vast majority of utility customers subsidizing rooftop-solar owners. The bill would lead to gradual changes — what lawmakers call a “glide path” — that eventually would prevent subsidies.

“This bill is fair,” Bradley said. “It’s a thoughtful glide path to get us to a no-subsidy [system].”

But opponents argued that the complicated issue should be studied and said the bill could cause heavy job losses in the rooftop-solar industry. Sen. Jeff Brandes, R-St. Petersburg, said the bill would “fundamentally” change the industry and that lawmakers should take a more measured approach.

“This bill is a sledgehammer of a bill on the solar industry of Florida,” Brandes said.

The House voted 83-31 to pass the bill last week, meaning it is now ready to go to Gov. Ron DeSantis. Backers of the bill included Florida Power & Light, which ran television ads urging lawmakers to act.

The issue deals with what is known as “net metering,” which involves the interplay between utilities and rooftop solar owners, including credits that utilities provide for electricity generated by rooftop solar systems.

The Florida Public Service Commission in 2008 established rules that, with increased use of rooftop-solar systems over the years, have helped fuel the debate about subsidies.

People who own rooftop solar systems are required to hook up to utility systems and are able to sell excess electricity and receive bill credits in return. Under the 2008 rules, monthly credits are provided at utilities’ retail rates. An important part of the bill would change that to ultimately providing the credits at what are known as “full avoided cost” rates, which would reduce the amounts going to rooftop solar owners.

Part of the subsidy argument also stems from utilities continuing to face the overall costs of operating the electric



SHUTTERSTOCK

Opponents of the bill contend it could cripple the solar industry because it would reduce financial incentives for homeowners to install rooftop systems.

cal grid. Bradley said the rules were set in 2008 to subsidize a “nascent” rooftop solar industry but have led to shifting costs to the broader group of utility customers.

But opponents of the bill contend it could cripple the solar industry because it would reduce financial incentives for homeowners to install rooftop systems. They also have questioned the arguments about cost shifts, saying more evidence was needed.

“We’re not sure about the data that we’re relying on,” Sen. Lori Berman, D-Delray Beach, said.

The bill would phase in credit changes over a series of years, starting in 2024, and would require the Public Service Commission to adopt new rules that would take effect Jan. 1, 2029.

In part, the rules would require that a “customer who owns or leases renewable generation must pay the full cost of electric service and may not be subsidized by the public utility’s general body of ratepayers.”

Also, the rules would require that “all energy delivered by the customer-owned or leased renewable generation to the public utility must be credited to the customer at the public utility’s full avoided costs.”

The bill would allow current rooftop solar customers to keep their net-metering rate designs for 20 years, as many rooftop systems are financed.

A House staff analysis said the state had 90,552 rooftop-solar systems at the end of 2020, an increase of about 30,000 from the previous year. That, however, represented less than 1% of the 10.5 million utility customers at the time.

Jim Saunders reports for the News Service of Florida.

Beefing Up Its Cybersecurity, Google Buys Mandiant for \$5.4B

by Matt Ott

Google is fortifying its cloud services with a \$5.4 billion acquisition of the cybersecurity firm Mandiant, the company announced.

The acquisition is the first of many that analysts foresee in the cybersecurity sector following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Analysts and government officials have said they expect a wave of cyberattacks from Russia and others as geopolitical tensions rise.

Google, a subsidiary of Mountain View, California-based Alphabet Inc., will pay \$23 per Mandiant share in all-cash deal expected to close this year. The price represents a 57% premium on Mandiant’s share price in early February, when speculation about a deal between the companies first surfaced.

Mandiant, based in Reston, Virginia, and its 5,300 employees will join Google Cloud as soon as the transaction closes.

Matt Ott reports for the Associated Press.



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **COUNCIL ZONING MEETING** on **March 23, 2022 beginning at 6:00 PM** to consider the First Amendment to the Amended and Restated Master Development Agreement and modification to the Downtown Doral South Pattern Book to transfer a ±1.35 acre parcel of land and 15,000 square feet of office space to the Downtown Doral, Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) development program. The City Council will consider this item for **SECOND READING**. The meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166**.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE No. 2021-37

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, APPROVING/DENYING THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDED AND RESTATED MASTER DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT AND A MODIFICATION TO THE DOWNTOWN DORAL SOUTH PATTERN BOOK, TO TRANSFER A ±1.35 ACRE PARCEL OF LAND AND 15,000 SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE SPACE TO THE DOWNTOWN DORAL DMU DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 22-03-DOR-12

APPLICANTS: CC Homes at Doral, LLC, CC-WCD TIC and White Course Lennar, LLC

LOCATION: Generally located east of NW 87 Avenue and north of NW 41 Street

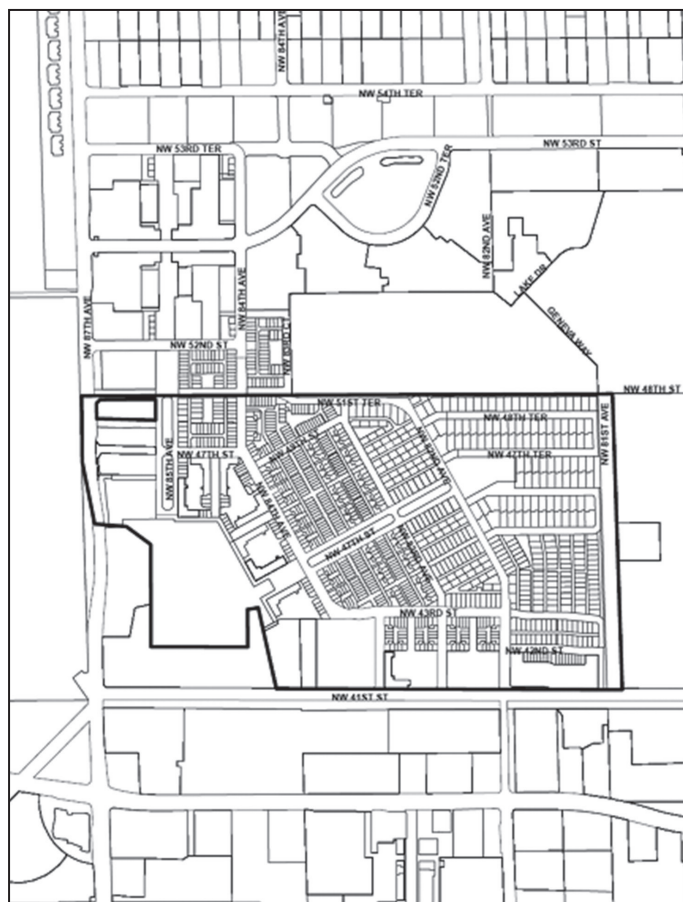
FOLIO: Various folio numbers

SIZE: ±130.15 acres

REQUEST: CC Homes at Doral, LLC, CC-WCD TIC and White Course Lennar, LLC are requesting Mayor and City Council approval of the First Amendment to the Amended and Restated Master Development Agreement and modification to the Downtown Doral South Patten Book to transfer a ±1.35 acre parcel of land and 15,000 square feet of office space to the Downtown Doral, Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) development program. The development program, as amended, will consist of 2,599 residential dwelling units with a population density based thereupon, 30,000 square feet of retail/commercial/restaurant use, 120,000 square feet of office use, up to 7 acres of civic use, and +/-7.6 acres of publicly accessible recreational land, with building heights of up to 8 stories.

Copies of the Downtown Doral South Pattern Book and First Amendment to the Amended and Restated Master Development Agreement are on file at the City of Doral Planning and Zoning Department located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166.

Location Map



Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes If a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, 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. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

Connie Diaz, MMC
City Clerk
City of Doral