

BANKING/ FINANCE

Cryptocurrency Brokers Push for Transparency Before Rules Get Made



BITPANDA

Firms such as eToro Europe and Bitpanda GmbH say clear, “know your customer” rules would let trading platforms go mainstream more easily, gain clients and eventually tap institutional business.

by Todd White

The latest calls to regulate the exploding cryptocurrency market come from an unusual place.

Some of Europe’s largest digital-coin brokers, who would be saddled with the new rules, are actually asking for them in a bid to clear the air and shake off perceptions they help criminals transfer money. Firms such as eToro Europe Ltd. in London and Bitpanda GmbH in Vienna say clear, “know your customer” rules would let trading platforms go mainstream more easily, gain clients and eventually tap institutional business.

“We’d be happy to have regulations, so we know where we stand,” said Eric Demuth, the 31-year-old co-chief executive officer of Bitpanda in Vienna, who said he meets frequently with potential regulators at Austria’s Finance Ministry. Moving into loosely regulated jurisdictions like Malta or Gibraltar isn’t interesting because “it doesn’t look good,” he said.

Pursuing transparency may seem ironic in a digital-coin market that mushroomed in the shadows since 2009 to as big as \$800 billion. In many countries, people can still buy bitcoin from specialized cash machines without showing any ID, and then use it for trading or for buying luxury goods, contraband and even property, leaving few if any traces of identity.

“This is all about where the burden of proof lies for anti-money-laundering, so wanting regulations seems very sensible,” said Marc Ostwald, global strategist at ADM Investor Services International in London. “Even if you’re making a killing in trading, someone could come up with an unexpected piece of regulation that puts a big red line through your business plan.”

In the U.S., San Francisco-based Coinbase has garnered 20 million users while rigorously documenting its clients. In Asia, Japan’s supportive rules have made it perhaps the global center for digital coins. In Europe, the business is relatively smaller. And for many brokers, nabbing an institutional customer is tough to impossible. In-house compliance rules of money managers typically limit dealings with unregulated firms.

The European Commission and regional supervisors are currently study-

ing whether current European Union rules can be applied to crypto trading. The market, whose value rose to more than \$800 billion in January, has shrunk to about \$430 billion, according to data on more than 1,600 digital coins and tokens tracked by Coinmarketcap.com.

At the same time some tax agencies, such as those in the U.S. and Spain, have demanded brokers and banks turn over names and trading data on crypto clients, an ugly situation for a customer who assumed some level of anonymity.

Platforms in Europe don’t want a harsh decision like Germany’s BaFin made in March, classifying tokens and virtual currencies as “financial instruments,” thereby setting extensive requirements on operators.

“That would be horrible” for Austrian platforms, said Demuth, who’s gearing up to go after money managers someday with co-founder Paul Klanschek, 28. Bitpanda forecasts trading volume in 2018 to roughly triple to \$2.4 billion from last year’s level.

In the U.K., online currency-trader eToro opened for business in 2007, two years before bitcoin was created. Cryptocurrencies now encompass about 75 percent of its business and eToro Managing Director Iqbal Gandham is chairing a trade group to bring transparency to their industry, he said. Members include Coinbase UK and the CEX.IO exchange.

“The benefits of regulation are clear. An appropriate framework would serve to both protect consumers, and ensure the longevity and legitimacy of the industry itself,” Gandham said.

While some brokers have actively sought for digital assets to be regulated as if they were a traditional asset, such as gold, Gandham rejects that approach.

“Given that we are dealing with new and nascent technology, we wouldn’t want to simply cherry pick from existing regulation developed for other asset classes,” he said.

Potential rules “would need to focus on those crypto organizations that interact with consumers — the ‘on-’ and ‘off-’ ramps between fiat and cryptocurrencies. You can look at Japan to see how this might work.”

Todd White reports for Bloomberg News.



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **Council Zoning Hearing** on **Wednesday, May 23, 2018 beginning at 6:00 PM**, to consider a Special Exception application to permit a new and used automobile dealership in a parcel of land theoretically located on the southwest corner of the intersection of NW 97th Avenue and NW 12th Street, in accordance with Section 74-152(5) of the Land Development Code. This meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166**. The proposed special exception applies to the property shown on the map below.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 18-

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, APPROVING/ DENYING A SPECIAL EXCEPTION APPLICATION TO PERMIT THE SALE OF NEW AND USED AUTOMOBILE DEALERSHIP ON APPROXIMATELY .78+/- ACRE PARCEL OF LAND THEORETICALLY LOCATED ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE INTERSECTION OF NW 97 AVENUE AND NW 12 STREET, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 74-152(5) OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 18-05-DOR-01

APPLICANT: Easton Real Estate Holdings, LLC

PROJECT OWNERS: Easton Real Estate Holdings, LLC

LOCATION: Theoretically located on the southwest corner of the intersection of NW 97th Avenue and NW 12th Street, City of Doral, Florida

FOLIO NUMBERS: 35-3032-000-0123

SIZE OF PROPERTY: .78± Acres (34,156 Square Feet)

PRESENT LAND USE: Industrial (I)

PRESENT ZONING: Industrial (I)

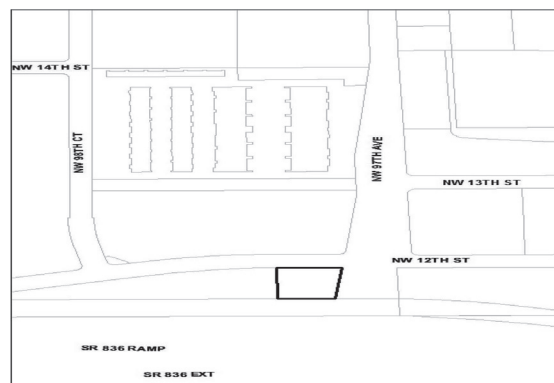
REQUEST: The Easton Real Estate Holdings, Inc. is requesting a Special Exception to permit a new and used automobile dealership in a parcel of land theoretically located on the southwest corner of the intersection of NW 97th Avenue and NW 12th Street, in accordance with Section 74-152(5) of the Land Development Code.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: A portion of the southeast ¼ of Section 32, Township 53 South, Range 40 East, Miami-Dade County, Florida being more particularly described as follows:

Begin at the intersection of the southerly right of way line of N.W. 12th Street as shown on the plat of “International Corporate Park Section 4” as recorded in Plat Book 150 at Page 79 with the westerly right of way line of N.W. 97th Avenue as recorded in Official Records Book 17500 at Page 3719 both of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida; Thence south 89 degrees 54 minutes 42 second west, along said southerly right of way line of N.W. 12th Street, for 179.09 feet to a point of curvature; thence continue along said southerly right of way line along a circular curve to the left having a radius of 1960.00 feet and a central angle of 00 degrees 36 minutes 41 seconds for an ARC distance of 20.91 feet; thence south 00 degrees 05 minutes 18 seconds east for 179.74 feet; thence north 89 degrees 54 minutes 42 seconds east, along the northerly line of a 100 foot railroad right of way as recorded in Official Records Book 4357 at 18 minutes 29 seconds east, along said westerly right of way line of N.W. 97th Avenue, for 180.98 feet to the point of beginning.

I hereby certify: that this “boundary survey” of the property described hereon is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief as recently surveyed and drawn under my supervision and direction. This survey complies with the minimum technical standards adopted by the Florida State Board of Surveyors and Mappers pursuant to Chapter 5J-17, Florida Administrative Code.

Location Map



Information relating the subject application is on file and may be examined in the City of Doral, Planning and Zoning Department Located at **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL. 33166**. All persons are invited to appear at this meeting or be represented by an agent, or to express their views in writing addressed to the City Clerk, **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL. 33166**. Maps and other data pertaining to these applications are available for public inspection during normal business hours in City Hall. Any persons wishing to speak at a public hearing should register with the City Clerk prior to that item being heard. 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, all persons 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.

NOTE: If you are not able to communicate, or are not comfortable expressing yourself, in the English language, it is your responsibility to bring with you an English-speaking interpreter when conducting business at the City of Doral during the zoning application process up to, and including, appearance at a hearing. This person may be a friend, relative or someone else. A minor cannot serve as a valid interpreter. The City of Doral DOES NOT provide interpretation services during the zoning application process or during any quasi-judicial proceeding.

NOTA: Si usted no está en capacidad de comunicarse, o no se siente cómodo al expresarse en inglés, es de su responsabilidad traer un intérprete del idioma inglés cuando trate asuntos públicos o de negocios con la Ciudad de Doral durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación, incluyendo su comparecencia a una audiencia. Esta persona puede ser un amigo, familiar o alguien que le haga la traducción durante su comparecencia a la audiencia. Un menor de edad no puede ser intérprete. La Ciudad de Doral NO suministra servicio de traducción durante ningún procedimiento durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación.

Connie Diaz, CMC
City Clerk
City of Doral
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