Kendall residents take fight against 5G towers to Miami-Dade commissioners

By Ladra on June 11, 2024 · 5 Comments



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SUMO

County urges state legislature to back off

For months, Kendall residents have been calling county commissioners, state senators and representatives to complain about the 5G towers popping up without notice in their neighborhoods — sometimes on the sidewalk right in front of their homes. About 60 of them gathered on a recent Sunday to protest the lack of public input and notification and the pre-emption of any and all local government oversight.

Many of the same residents — including a cancer survivor worried about the longterm effects of the towers — went to County Hall last week to support a measure by Miami-Dade Commissioner **Raquel Regalado** to urge the Florida Legislature to repeal the state law that takes from local government any power to regulate small wireless facilities. At the very least, the law should allow the county to determine the design, aesthetic and location of such facilities, the measure states.

Regalado also wants to require the companies installing the towers to provide notice and an opportunity for public input.

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This lack of notice is a major thorn in the side of Kendall residents, some of whom have come home after a day's work to find a tower planted on the sidewalk adjacent to their homes. More than two dozen residents protested Sunday to tell one of those companies, Crown Castle, that they have not honored their own words on their own website: *"We involve your local community and*

government leaders in every step of the process—ensuring that your unique needs are met, and that you can continue to live life the way you've come to expect for many years to come."

"Beautiful words, but meaningless," said **Michael Rosenberg**, president of the Kendall Federation of Homeowners Association. "Why won't Crown Castle do this?





"It's not about being against 5G, but it *is* about responsible placement of those towers," Rosenberg said. "It's about doing what those words in their mission statement say. It's about making sure the towers are not placed next a home where the homeowner became cancer free. It's about discussing with the community where the towers will be placed so that you don't go to work in the morning and then come back to find a tower in your yard!"

That's basically what happened to **Lissette Monzon**. One day, she found an obscure door hanger about 5G towers coming to the neighborhood. The line for the possible installation dates was blank. The next day, she came home to find a 32-foot tower hugging her property line.

"We spend time learning, gardening, reading and playing where will now be directly under a 5G tower," Monzon, who home schools her 9 and 11-year olds, told commissioners Tuesday. "I am a real family in Miami who is a victim of this hasty 5G rollout."

Monzon says that Crown Castle also says they will have their facilities "inconspicuously installed on existing infrastructure." That's not what is happening in Kendall.

"Sadly, these private corporations and their construction partners, like Crown Castle, have lied and have made you all accessories to their crime," Monzon told the commission.



For her and countless of others, it's not just about the property value being lowered. It's about the health risks associated with 5G towers and the stickers that are put on the structures that say "this product can expose you to Chromium (hexavalent compounds), which is known in the state of California to cause cancer and/or birth defects and other reproductive harm."

Stan Glazier is a cancer survivor and those words make him nervous.

"I came home one day and this thing was erected right next, 15 feet from the bedroom of my children," Glazier said. "On the pole there's also a sign that says causes cancer and birth defects. I am a cancer survivor. I'm not against 5G. We need it."

But the placement of the "monstrosities" has to be more responsible, he added. "Not next to people's houses."

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He and others said that their neighborhoods have no utility poles, everything is underground. That makes it impossible for the poles to blend into the surrounding neighborhood, as is required by public works to get a permit, said **Sylvia Gutierrez** of Glen Cove.

Gutierrez thanked Regalado for sponsoring the legislation and said she had her neighbors' full support. There are three homes with these 5G poles in her neighborhood, including Glazier's, who doesn't know what kind of long term effects the facility may have.

"And let me tell you, neither does the American Cancer Society," she said, asking the commission to make it a priority and put it on a lobbyist's checklist.

Regalado's measure — which was cosponsored by four commissioners — also directs the mayor's office to create a program to provide notice to the public anytime there is an application for the installation of a 5G tower and an online platform with information about the applications received and the status of each. It passed unanimously.



“We cannot require these companies to do anything. The state allows them to do this work. Period,” Regalado said, adding that the employee in permitting that the contractors pay the salaries for are not there to expedite the permits, even though they do, but to give the county at least some involvement.

“So we would at least have a record and some sort of weigh-in regarding ADA and the sidewalk,” Regalado said. “If we did not have that vehicle the poles would just go up.

If you revoke that, that means we participate in none of it. We don’t get notice. We do not know what’s going on and we can’t tell you about it,” she added. “I know that the expediting of a permit sounds like we’re helping, but in reality what we’re doing is participant in a process that has already excluded us.”

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Vice Chair **Anthony Rodriguez** and commissioners **JC Bermudez, Keon Hardemon** and **Eileen Higgins**, said they each faced similar complaints from their constituents. Higgins even passed similar legislation some years back when the poles popped up in District 5.

“This issue is an absolute nightmare,” Higgins said. “They hit District 5 first in 2019. It was a land grab. They got permission to put these poles whenever they want, wherever they want, right next to each other… they’re everywhere.



“They were going to put three poles in front of the Freedom Tower,” Higgins said. “The only reason I got those poles moved was me. I threatened to lie down and let them run right over me.”

But **Oliver Gilbert** said what everybody else was thinking: “I don’t actually believe they pay attention to our urging.”

The sure didn’t the first time.

Monzon said the measure doesn’t go far enough and that the county should work to remove the poles that have already been installed. But she was preaching to the wrong choir.

Rodriguez, who said he had also looked into passing some kind of legislation, said he has talked to the county attorneys about what the county can do. “And I continue to be told that we are extremely limited, if not entirely limited,” he said.

But the conversation he should have is with his pal, House Speaker **Daniel Perez**, who is not as limited. If Rodriguez was serious about helping his constituents with this, he should use his friendships in Tallahassee to make it happen.

5G towers, Kendall, Raquel Regalado



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