



**Government of the District of Columbia
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**ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the
Committee on Government Operations
Performance Oversight Hearing on the
Office of the Chief Technology Officer
January 16, 2020**

Chair Todd and members of the Committee on Government Operations, I am Randy Speck, Chair of ANC 3/4G (Chevy Chase), and I am testifying on behalf of our Commission, which authorized this testimony at its February 13, 2020 meeting by a vote of 5 to 0 (a quorum being 4).

Our ANC and other ANC commissioners have been frustrated over the last year by our inability to get any support from the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) for funded programs designed to increase our ability to serve our constituents. Despite repeated efforts, OCTO has not even been willing to meet with us to discuss our needs for technological support that will improve communications among ANC commissioners, as well as with our constituents. The Council appropriated \$100,000 in the FY 2020 budget “to procure or license mobile technology or software to support Commissioners who wish to use such technology to improve outreach and engagement

with their residents.” We have repeatedly attempted to engage both the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (OANC) and OCTO to ensure that these funds are used as needed and intended, but to no avail. We enlist the Committee’s assistance to engage OCTO so that we can receive needed and promised support for this important program and for other technological enhancements that will improve our ability to serve our communities.

I first contacted OCTO on April 27, 2019, at Mayor Bowser’s open house for ANC commissioners. Adrian Sutton represented OCTO at that meeting, and I described our need for assistance on a variety of technological issues — e.g., enhancing communications among commissioners to address common issues, assisting with video recording and posting of ANC meetings, improving ANC websites, as well as implementation of technology for commissioner to communicate better with constituents. On May 6, 2019, Mr. Sutton said he would follow up. After hearing nothing further, I followed up on May 20, 2019, with “a number of ideas, some of which we should be able to implement immediately and at little or no cost.” I asked for a meeting “with you and others at OCTO to make this happen,” but I never received any response.

On June 18, 2019, I wrote Lindsey Parker, Chief Technology Officer, and reiterated our interest in “working on ways to improve ANCs’ use of technology to communicate with their constituents and with each other.” I asked her for a meeting to discuss these topics and followed up with another email on June 24, 2019. I never received a response.

On June 28, 2019, another ANC commissioner from ANC 2B, Lucky Barbieri, wrote to Stephen Miller, OCTO's Associate Chief, Applications Solutions, with the same plea for a meeting to discuss how OCTO could help us. Mr. Miller responded on July 1, 2019, that he was "meeting with the rest of the OCTO team today to discuss this and I will get back to you when we have the right resources to follow up." There was no follow up from OCTO.

On a parallel track, we were attempting to get the OANC to begin planning for use of the appropriated funds in the FY 2020 budget to enhance ANC communications. On August 15, 2019, Commissioner Barbieri and I met with the OANC Director Gottlieb Simon. We encouraged the OANC to work with OCTO to make sure that ANCs were getting the best technological support possible. We specifically urged the OANC to work with OCTO to acquire the software that was funded in the FY 2020 budget. We also tried to get the OANC to convene a meeting of ANC chairs to discuss these issues. So far as we are aware, OANC has taken no concrete steps to work with OCTO.

In frustration, on August 9, 2019, I contacted Shawn Hilgendorf, Committee Director for the Committee on Facilities and Procurement — which has oversight of the OANC — to get his assistance to set up a meeting with OCTO. On August 12, 2019, I followed up with an email explaining the need for this meeting.

Our requested meeting with OCTO is just to see what the District's current capabilities are and to see whether there are existing resources that we can use — e.g., common hosting and formatting for individual ANC websites or ways to establish a "listserv" for commissioners to share experience and information. We expect the OANC to take the lead on using the newly available funds, but we want to coordinate with OCTO and use its expertise

as well. So far, we've been unsuccessful in even getting a meeting or returned emails.

On August 14, 2019, Mr. Hilgendorf reported that he had spoken with OCTO's Chief of Staff.

She said that her team was in the process of pulling together the existing resources available for ANCs and initiating planning for using the resources the FY20 budget. She requested two weeks to get things together on her end before scheduling a meeting. I asked that she be in touch with me so that I can keep you updated and make the connection as quickly as possible.

On October 21, 2019, Mr. Hilgendorf emailed that he had "not yet heard back from OCTO as was promised in August." In a subsequent email the next day, he said that "given the lack of substantive progress" with OCTO, Councilmember Robert White, Chair of the Committee on Facilities and Procurement, would try to "elevate and accelerate this process" and will "get OCTO and/or OANC to provide a better roadmap for engagement with the ANCs and completion of the project." On November 19, 2019, he again reported that "the Councilmember is working on a meeting with both Directors at the same time to ensure they give this the level of attention it deserves and are working together." Finally, on January 7, 2020, Mr. Hilgendorf said that Councilmember Robert White's office "continues to put pressure on the OANC," and he encouraged us to participate in the oversight hearings to raise the level of awareness on this topic.

It is more than disappointing that OCTO seems to have disregarded the ANC's pleas for help. Proper implementation and use of technology tools can dramatically improve our ability to serve our constituents and make the volunteer work that we do significantly more efficient, productive, and responsive to our communities. Not all

commissioners will use these tools, but they should be available to those who want them. The District has made strides in improving its technology resources, but they will not be useful if OCTO does not apply its expertise to help us access them and thereby bolster the District's first line of residents' representation.

We ask the Committee to direct the Chief Technology Officer to meet promptly with a representative group of ANC commissioners, to identify technologies that are currently available to assist commissioners in communications with each other and constituents, and to work with the OANC "to procure or license mobile technology or software to support Commissioners who wish to use such technology to improve outreach and engagement with their residents," as the Council appropriated for FY 2020. OCTO should report back to the Committee on a regular schedule for evaluation and to ensure that it follows through on previously established but not yet implemented commitments.

Thank you.