



**Government of the District of Columbia  
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

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3/4G-06 - Peter Gosselin      3/4G-07 - Chris Fromboluti, Vice-Chair

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**ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the  
Committee on Government Operations and Facilities  
Performance Oversight Hearing on the  
Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions  
February 9, 2021**

Chairperson White and members of the Committee on Government Operations and Facilities, I am Randy Speck, Chair of ANC 3/4G, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify about the performance of the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (OANC). I am testifying on behalf of our Commission, which authorized this testimony at its February 8, 2021 meeting by a vote of 7 to 0 (a quorum being 4).

The OANC has provided significant assistance to our Commission over the past year, particularly in helping to initiate and train our five newly elected commissioners. Director Simon and his staff have been exceptionally responsive and helpful in assisting commissioners with their questions. We also appreciate the OANC's help throughout the

public health emergency in providing advice on conducting virtual meetings and in completing required filings remotely. As we have in the past, however, we continue to seek ways that the OANC can assist us in improving communications among commissioners across the District and between commissioners and their constituents.

First, the pandemic has highlighted the need for commissioners to share their experiences and to address issues that affect all District residents. Starting in March 2020, an ad hoc group of commissioners began meeting virtually each week to review health and economic issues related to COVID-19. Though the initial impetus for meeting was the public health emergency, the commissioners expanded the scope of their discussions to consider racial and social equity issues sparked by the killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement. Over the course of the year, the group expanded the scope of its meetings to include other topics. It is apparent that commissioners in every Ward have similar concerns and can benefit from sharing experiences and ideas.

In another instance of cooperation across ANC boundaries, our ANC recently addressed an issue that affects ANCs 3/4G, 4A, and 4C. The District of Columbia Public Schools proposed to move the Lafayette Elementary School Pre-K4 program to the recently purchased Military Road School, located in ANC 4A and adjacent to ANC 4C, but had not notified either of those affected commissioners. We reached out to our fellow commissioners and worked closely with them to make an alternative proposal that was acceptably to both communities and that Mayor Bowser and Chancellor Ferebee agreed to adopt. There are undoubtedly other issues that span ANC borders, but commissioners often make these connections only by chance.

We encourage the OANC to explore ways to facilitate regular communications among commissioners across the District. For instance, it could organize at least quarterly meetings of ANC chairs to identify common concerns and formalize the city-wide commissioners' virtual meetings. We have previously proposed a listserv for commissioners to share agendas, resolutions, and organizational approaches. While the OANC does offer an ANC Portal for sharing of resolutions and letters, our Commission has found its use to be cumbersome and limited in the type of information that it contains. The OANC could also organize and broaden weekly or monthly virtual meetings for all commissioners, even after the public health emergency ends. These opportunities to share ideas and information could improve all our ANCs.

Second, we continue to look to the OANC for assistance in communicating more effectively with our constituents. Our Commission has occasionally used on-line surveys to gather data on our constituent's views, but we need standardized technology and analytical tools to ensure that the survey results will be reliable. The most difficult challenge is getting the word out to all of our residents about surveys or topics that affect them when there is no database of reliable contact information. We rely on social media and community listservs to reach constituents, but many constituents continue to be left out. We would welcome more effective ways to reach constituents and would appreciate any direct help that OANC can offer, including sharing best practices among ANCs and providing materials on the role and work of the ANCs that we can put on our website or distribute to constituents.

Last year, with the Committee’s assistance, we attempted to arrange a meeting with the OANC and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to consider ways to expand our ability to communicate with residents.<sup>1</sup> We never had such a meeting. We again request that the Committee — which now oversees both OANC and OCTO — assist in facilitating this discussion.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> See ANC 3/4G’s testimony at the OANC performance oversight hearing on January 30, 2020 (available at <https://bit.ly/3cH0aJH>) and its testimony at the OCTO performance hearing on January 16, 2020 (available at <https://bit.ly/2RynvRI>).