

Charter 738 News!

Quarterly Newsletter from the Office of ANCs

Vol. 4, Issue #3



Office of
Advisory
Neighborhood
Commissions

Welcome to this Quarter's edition!

Inside:

1. Introducing Absorb! The OANC's new Learning Management System
2. Technology and Training Updates
3. Sorting out the Rules that Govern ANCs
4. QFR OneDrive Retirement and What To Know



Welcome New Commissioners

Please join us in welcoming six new ANC Commissioners whose terms began in September 2025!

Alex Akalu - 4A06

Tamira Benitez - 4B05

Dayan Reynolds - 6/8F05

Celete Kato - 7E07

Harold Cunningham - 7F08

Joy Page - 8C08

Michael Pugh - 8D02

The Board of Elections also certified **twenty (20) vacant Single Member Districts (SMDs)**. If you know of any interested neighbors who want to serve as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, contact the Board of Elections at candidate@dcboe.org.

The **vacant SMDs** are: **2A02, 2A05, 2A06, 2A07, 2B09, 3C05, 3C07, 3E07, 4A06, 4A07, 5A05, 5E03, 6A02, 6E04, 7D02, 7D06, 7E05, 8D04, 8D05, 8E04**

Important Dates

4th Quarter QFR Deadline

November 15, 2025

1st Quarter QFR Deadline

February 15, 2026

**Register to Testify in
ANC Amendment Act Hearing of 2025**

December 3, 2025

ANC 2025 Holiday Reception

December 5, 2025

New Grant Forms and Webpage

You asked, we listened! OANC has upgraded its Grant Forms and Reports to be fully electronic, fillable, and compatible with e-signatures, making the grant process smoother.

Plus, all grant-related resources are now conveniently located on a dedicated Grants page.

Check out the new page today!

OANC in the Community

OANC would love to showcase and highlight your efforts engaging with the community!

Please send us photos and videos of your outreach activities for a chance to be featured on our website.

Submit your media to Erik Meltzer @ Erik.Meltzer@dc.gov

Reminders & Tips

OANC Handbook

The OANC Handbook is now available in digital format and is available on the OANC website under Training Resources.

Remember, this pocket guide is intended to provide Commissioners with access to things such as QFR reporting deadlines, Robert's Rules, guidance, and other resources for OANC information.

Paid Family Leave & Unemployment Compensation

ANCs are not required to pay the Paid Family Leave (PFL) tax and not required to pay the Unemployment Compensation Tax to the Department of Employment Services. If your ANC has been paying into these funds, it may cancel the account and seek a refund of monies paid into it.

For information on how to do that, contact GC Denise Wiktor at denise.wiktor@dc.gov



ANCs and Equal Access

The Office of the Attorney General issued a Legal Advice Letter to ANCs on November 10th concerning Equal Access to ANC records and Password-Protected ANC records (letter attached and it is also on the OAG & OANC websites).

The OANC notes that the advice from the OAG concurs with advice the OANC has previously given to individual Commissioners. In brief, the letter concludes the following:

- *the equal access guarantee does not automatically entitle Commissioners to ANC account passwords; but*
- *ANC records held in a password-protected account must be promptly provided to any Commissioner who requests them for official purposes.*

The OAG further “underscore[s] that a Commissioner may seek and obtain ANC records under the equal-access provision only ‘to carry out Commission duties and responsibilities’ of the ANC Act [and] does not empower Commissioners to seek or obtain ANC records for personal use.”

Documents on ANC OneDrive's

The OANC also notes that many ANCs are successfully storing Commission records on a central OneDrive, which is password protected. OneDrive can share folders with all Commissioners to provide access to records without the use of the password.

If your Commission has questions or needs assistance setting up shared OneDrive folders for Commissioner access, please let us know. We are available to assist.

Mayor's Resolution Portal Submission

We want to clarify that the OANC does not manage or have oversight authority over the Mayor's Resolution Portal. Despite ongoing concerns raised by both OANC and several Commissioners regarding accessibility and ease of use, we do not have control over its functionality or maintenance. While we regularly engage with the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM) to advocate for improvements, it remains a low priority for EOM at this time.

In the meantime, please continue to send your resolutions or request status updates by emailing Jim Slattery at Jim.Slattery@dc.gov. We remain committed to advocating for a better system and will continue working with EOM to ensure this issue receives the attention it deserves. This remains a priority for our office, and we appreciate your continued feedback and engagement as we work toward a better platform.

Direct Food and Clothing Aid

At this time of year, the OANC is reviewing a lot of grants that involve food baskets and clothing drives. ANCs are prohibited from directly purchasing any food that is not the \$100.00 allowed for snacks at meetings. They also cannot support financially the purchase of food for baskets or clothing to be given away by a grant applicant to individuals or families. The ANC may support the non-food portion of these programs such as the rental trucks to distribute the food or the rental of tents tables and chairs at a coat drive.

The ANC also needs to keep in mind that the D.C. Code provides that the public purpose requirement includes a “significant benefit” to the residents and businesses within the Commission. Programs that offer a benefit to a small pool of people are not permissible. The Code also requires grant requests to be submitted to the OANC as well as the ANC. The OANC will review the application and work with the applicant, where possible, to ensure the application meets the requirements of the Code before the ANC votes on it. You may review the OANC policy for reviewing grants with a food component [here](#). If you have any questions, contact GC Denise Wiktor at denise.wiktor@dc.gov.



Training Center

Introducing **Absorb!** The new Learning Management System

The OANC is excited to announce the launch of **Absorb**, the agency's new learning management system (LMS)! Absorb will serve as the central hub for all staff training, making it easier to access, track, and complete professional development courses.

As part of this transition, we'll be moving all training content currently hosted on YouTube or as standalone trainings into Absorb. While video-based training will still be used, and will be available on YouTube, they'll now be embedded directly in the platform, allowing for a more secure, centralized, and trackable learning experience.

What to expect:

- Your Absorb account has already been created.
- Be on the lookout for an activation email from noreply@myabsorb.com with instructions to log in and set your password.

A short YouTube walkthrough is available to help you get started with logging in and navigating the platform.

You may view it here: <https://youtu.be/5YY-b0RFpw0>

Our training specialist, [Erik Meltzer](#), will be holding office hours weekly to support commissioners getting acclimated to the LMS.

Absorb is more than just a training portal. It's a step towards a more organized, accountable, and user-friendly learning environment for our agency. Stay tuned for more!



Resource Reminder

Recently, we've received several requests for training on tools like OneDrive, Box (including file sharing and electronic signatures), GovDelivery, and basic email functions. The great news is that these topics are already covered in our existing training catalog!

To access these resources, visit the OANC website and navigate to the Training Resources section or check out our YouTube channel

If you have questions, need help accessing the materials, or would like to request specific training, please don't hesitate to reach out. You can email OANC directly or contact our training specialist, Erik Meltzer, who is happy to assist.

Microsoft Teams Walkthrough

As we roll out our new LMS, we want to highlight the walkthrough of Microsoft Teams, the DC Government's and OANC's official platform for virtual meetings and collaboration. Microsoft Teams is:

- FOIA-compliant
- Secure and encrypted
- Integrated with our agency's Microsoft 365 environment

Using unauthorized platforms for agency business can violate government ethics rules and public records laws, putting both staff and the agency at risk. Microsoft Teams ensures that our communications are transparent, accessible, and properly archived.

This video will walk you through:

1. Pre-meeting setup
2. In-meeting tools and etiquette
3. Screen sharing and collaboration features

Whether you're new to Microsoft Teams or just need a refresher, this video is a great opportunity to sharpen your skills and align with agency standards.

Treasurer Resources – Check Curing

A new training course on check curing is now available in Absorb. This course is tailored for individuals serving in the Treasurer role who want to strengthen their understanding of the procedures for addressing deficiencies in the check-writing process, particularly as they relate to managing quarterly financial reports.

Enrollment is limited to Treasurers, though exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis. For more information or to request access, please contact Erik.Meltzer@dc.gov.



Technology Center

Exploring PDF Tools – Alternatives to Adobe

Managing and editing PDF documents is a routine need across our Commissions, whether it's merging QFR pages, annotating meeting minutes, or filling out forms. While Adobe Acrobat remains the industry standard for PDF handling, it does require a paid license. The most reliable and secure approach is, and will always be, to purchase Adobe licenses. Currently, the purchase of an Adobe license would require the use of Commission operating funds, as the OANC and OCTO do not have an enterprise agreement with Adobe to provide 300+ licenses.

While Adobe offers business pricing, if there's broad interest across Commissions, we could explore a shared license agreement, potentially sharing the cost of Standard or Pro licenses (e.g., 46 vs. 345 licenses), which may offer cost savings and enable centralized support. Meanwhile, for those needing immediate, no-cost solutions, several free or low-cost alternatives are readily available:

- [PDFGear](#) – A user-friendly tool for merging, splitting, and converting PDFs.
- [PDF Arranger](#) – A lightweight, open-source option ideal for rearranging and combining pages.
- [Nitro PDF](#) – Offers a free tier with basic editing and merging features.
- [DocHub](#) – A web-based platform that supports annotation, signing, and collaboration.

While the OANC does not endorse any specific service, these tools may be viable options. Their functionality and security features vary, so it's important to review each platform's privacy policy and capabilities, especially when working with sensitive documents.

As we continue to assess Commissions' collective and specific needs, your feedback is welcome. If you rely heavily on PDF tools or have suggestions for preferred platforms, please share them with the OANC and your fellow Commissioners!

ANC Community Benefit Agreement and Grant Review Database

In December 2020, the D.C. Council passed the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions Participation in Planning Amendment Act, which, among other provisions, requires the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (OANC) to create and maintain a publicly accessible database of all community benefit agreements negotiated by Commissions.

To support both Commissioners and the public in accessing ANC Community Agreements and Grant Review documents, OANC, working in partnership with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO), has developed a searchable online portal. This new resource includes:

1. Community Benefit Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (CBAs and MOUs)
2. ABCA Alcohol Agreements
3. ABCA Cannabis Agreements negotiated by ANCs
4. ANC Grant Review documents

The ANC Community Benefit Agreement and Grant Review Database was officially launched in late October 2025.

For ease of access, the portal is integrated with District email accounts, allowing users to log in using their existing email credentials.

If you're unable to access your District email or Outlook account, please contact the OCTOHelps Support Center at 202-671-1566 to reset your password.

Shared Services – Additional Email Licenses available

Our office has heard from several Commissioners about their interest in setting up additional email accounts to support their Commission's work. These accounts are often used for specific functions, such as grants, community feedback, or internal distribution lists for subsets of Commissioners or administrative staff.

We're pleased to share that, under our current license agreement with OCTO, the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (OANC) can now offer each Commission at least one (1) additional Exchange email license. These are basic email-only licenses, meaning they do not include access to OneDrive, SharePoint, Teams, or other Microsoft Office services.

- Consider using these accounts to streamline communications around recurring tasks like grant applications, public feedback, or event coordination.
- If your Commission anticipates needing more than one account, feel free to include that in your request and we'll do our best to accommodate based on availability.
- These are provided free of charge and come at no cost to the Commission.

The request process is simple. Email OANCS@dc.gov with:

1. A brief description of the intended use;
2. Your preferred naming convention (e.g., 1aGrants@dc.gov);
3. And OANC will coordinate with OCTO to provision the licenses.



QFR OneDrive Retirement – ACTION REQUIRED

The OANC is writing to inform you of an important change regarding the use of the QFR OneDrive account associated with the QFR qfr@dc.gov OneDrive Account.

Effective January 1, 2026, the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (OANC) will remove every Commissioner's access to the QFR OneDrive. This change is part of our broader effort to streamline document management, improve data security, and ensure consistent use of official submission channels.

What This Means For You:

Starting January 1, 2026, the only acceptable methods for submitting QFR Reports, Meeting Minutes, Agendas, and other supporting documentation will be:

1. The QFR Portal
2. The QFR email: qfr@dc.gov
3. One-off communications or questions may be directed to the QFR Administrator, Dawn Dickerson.

Action Required by December 31, 2025

- Review the contents of your ANC folder on the QFR OneDrive and remove any documents not related to QFR submissions.
- After this date, any unrelated files will be permanently deleted from OANC-managed storage.
- All QFR related documents will be saved and retained by OANC.

Each Commissioner has access to a personal OneDrive account through their ANC Email Microsoft 365 account. We encourage you to use your personal OneDrive and/or your Commission's chosen option for storing ANC-related materials that are not submitted through the QFR process.

This change does not affect your ability to submit required documentation; it simply ensures that all submissions are routed and tracked through the appropriate and secure channels. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we implement this change. If you have any questions or need assistance transitioning your files, please don't hesitate to reach out.

OANC Policy Center

Protecting Financial Information: Use Box for Secure File Sharing

As part of our responsibilities under DC law, the OANC receives and transmits sensitive financial information related to ANC operations. It's essential that both OANC staff and Commissioners handle this information with care, ensuring it remains private and protected.

Email is not a secure method for sharing personally identifiable information (PII), as it can be compromised across devices, networks, and servers or even unintentionally shared through forwarding. To help safeguard financial data, OANC and ANC Commissioners have access to Box, a secure file-sharing platform approved for use across District agencies.

Each ANC is encouraged to configure its Box folders in a way that supports its workflow. Subfolders can be created for specific projects or tasks, and access should be granted only to individuals who need it. This ensures that sensitive documents, such as Quarterly Financial Reports (QFRs), are shared responsibly and securely. We strongly encourage all Commissioners to use Box when submitting QFRs and other financial documents.

To support you, the OANC has developed several resources to help you get started:

YouTube videos on utilizing the Box platform

- <https://youtu.be/SoE97Ky2bPc>
- <https://youtu.be/Y6uaLBFA6s>

BOX Tutorials & Step-by-Step guides

- <https://support.box.com/hc/en-us/articles/4404086971027-Signing-a-document>
- <https://support.box.com/hc/en-us/articles/4404105810195-Sending-a-document-for-signature>
- <https://support.box.com/hc/en-us/articles/360044196373-The-Basics-of-Box>

You can also find these resources on the OANC website under Training Resources. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact our training specialist, Erik Meltzer, or email OANCS directly.

Sorting Out Authorities Governing ANC's

When you have a question related to the operational rules governing ANC's, where do you look? The rules defining how ANC's operate, as well as the roles and responsibilities of officers, can be found in several places – but how do you know which source to use and when?

To assist you when you have a question, we are breaking it down here:

The order of authority for the various sources governing ANC's is as follows, beginning with the most authoritative.

1. D.C. statutes (laws) / D.C. Regulations / D.C. Agency requirements (State level)
2. ANC Bylaws (where not in conflict with the above)
3. ANC Standard Operating Procedures and/or resolutions or other ANC operating documents duly approved by the Commission (where not in conflict with any of the above)
4. *Robert's Rules of Order* ["Robert's" or "RONR"] (for areas where any of the above are silent).
Robert's does not replace any of the above; instead, it augments the above.
5. ANC Custom (when all of the above are silent).

Example: Duties of an ANC Chairperson

Using a recent question received by the OANC as an example, the following are the duties of an ANC chairperson based on the hierarchy above.

1. (First level): The Code of the District of Columbia states that "The Chairperson shall serve as convener of the Commission and shall chair the Commission meetings." (D.C. Official Code § 1–309.11(e)(1)(A)). While the Code does not define the meaning of "convener", it is generally understood to mean a person whose job it is to call people together for meetings. The language in the Code does not restrict a Chairperson from additional duties but, rather, ensures these duties as the foundation from which a Chairperson operates.
2. (Second level – Bylaws): An ANC's Bylaws may also assign duties to a chairperson. For example, it may include language such as "The Chairperson shall serve as a convener of Commission meetings and shall establish the draft agenda after consultation with Commission members." Similar language may occur in an ANC's operating procedures or standing rules. In this case, the Chairperson has been clearly assigned the additional duties of developing the draft agenda for Commission meetings and must consult members of the commission in doing so. This does not mean, however, that the Chairperson must include all suggested items on the draft agenda, but, instead, that consultation must occur.
3. (Third level – ANC Resolutions and Letters): Frequently ANC resolutions and letters designate the chairperson or some other commissioner as the duly authorized commissioner to represent the ANC on the matter before the D.C. Council, Agencies, and Boards and Commissions.
4. (Fourth level – *Robert's Rules of Order* (RONR)): RONR also assigns eleven principal duties to the presiding officer of an assembly, which can be found at RONR 47:7 (see RONR for full list).

Significant duties assigned by RONR in addition to those in the Code or Bylaws include:

- Item (3): To recognize members who are entitled to the floor (generally, no member of the assembly may speak unless recognized);

- Item (5): To protect the assembly from obviously dilatory motions by refusing to recognize them (i.e. the chairperson is charged with refusing to recognize motions intended to delay or postpone a decision on the main question before the body);
- Item (6): To enforce the rules relating to debate and those relating to order and decorum within the assembly (the chairperson may initiate action to remove those engaging in grave breaches of decorum from meetings);
- Item (7): To expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of members. (The chairperson is expected to recognize members who wish to speak and balance members' rights with the need to expedite business. Per Item (5) above, members do not have a right to disrupt, delay, or waste the time of the assembly and the chairperson may intervene to end such breaches of decorum); and
- Item (10): To authenticate by [their] signature, when necessary, all acts, orders, and proceedings of the assembly.

Pulling it all together

When statute, bylaws, and RONR are read together, the duties of an ANC chairperson are much more than merely presiding over a meeting. While often in consultation with their ANC colleagues, they are the final authority as convener in deciding the content and order of the draft agenda, the format of a meeting (in person or virtual), and the configuration/format of a virtual meeting (meeting or webinar). During a meeting, the chairperson is charged with the responsibility of maintaining the decorum of the meeting and ensuring that commissioners who wish to be recognized to speak are so recognized, that commissioners and members of the public not recognized to speak are silent, and that the meetings proceed in a timely manner without disruption or dilatory actions.

To this last point, a chairperson can in some instances, following appropriate warning to restore decorum, have a disruptive member of the community removed from a public meeting. Furthermore, the chairperson may even introduce a motion leading to a vote of the Commission to remove a Commissioner who repeatedly commits an obstinate or grave breach of order from a public meeting. For additional information on this last point, see the following OAG Advise Letters.

- ANC 5D: Questions Concerning Disruptive or Disorderly Conduct (December 15, 2017)
- ANC 2A01: Letter Re Commissioners Speaking in ANC Meetings (April 8, 2021)