

# Memorandum

Government of the District-of Columbia

TO: All Advisory Neighborhood Commissions      Office: Corporation Counsel  
Prepared by: OLC:LNG:lng

FROM: Karen L. Cooper *KLC*      Date: February 22, 1997  
Director  
Office of Legal Counsel  
Office of the Corporation Counsel

SUBJECT: Role of the Office of the Corporation Counsel  
vis-a-vis Advisory Neighborhood Commissions

The purpose of this memorandum is to describe the role of the Office of the Corporation Counsel vis-a-vis Advisory Neighborhood Commissions. with respect to Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, the Office of the Corporation Counsel performs two functions: (1) the rendering of oral and written legal advice upon request; and (2) legal representation in appropriate cases. These functions are also described in the 1997-1998 edition of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission Manual.

## ORAL AND WRITTEN LEGAL ADVICE

section 15(d) (3) (A) of the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions Act of 1975, D.C. Code § 1-263(d) (3) (A) (1992), provides:

(3) The Mayor shall provide assistance to the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions in the following areas:

(A) Legal interpretations of statutes concerning or affecting the Commissions, or of issues or concerns affecting the Commissions. These interpretations are to be obtained from the Corporation Counsel and may be requested directly by any Commission.

Thus, if any Commission or any individual ANC commissioner needs advice as to the proper interpretation of any statutory provision that deals with ANCs, the Commission or the individual commissioner may request such advice from the Corporation Counsel. Simple questions can often be answered by telephone. If the question is not amenable to a telephone response, the question should be submitted in writing. Normally, a written request for advice will be answered in writing. If written rather than oral advice is requested, we generally require that the person seeking the advice put the question in writing and include all the pertinent facts and copies of any documents that are relevant. written requests for advice should be sent to the corporation Counsel, Suite 1060, 441 4th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. For telephone advice, call 727-3400, and ask for Leo Gorman.

Over the years, many letters and memoranda of advice regarding ANC questions have been issued by this Office to ANC commissioners and to other persons within the District government. The advice rendered in some of these letters and memoranda may be out of date because of intervening changes in the laws affecting ANCs. Some of the advice contained in these letters and memoranda has been incorporated in the ANC Manual. These letters and memoranda have been collected in a binder which is located in the Librarian's Office of the Law Library of the Office of the Corporation Counsel. This library is located at the south end of 441 4th Street, N.W. on Level C-1. Level C-1 is the level below the street level. You should take one of the elevators to the right as you enter the building. Library hours are from 8:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. on weekdays. Anne Meglis is the Corporation Counsel librarian. If you wish to examine the letters and memoranda in the binder, I suggest you call Ms. Meglis at 727-6274 and let her know the date and time of your arrival to ensure that she will be there to serve you.

#### **LEGAL REPRESENTATION IN APPROPRIATE CASES**

The Office of the Corporation Counsel will, in appropriate circumstances, provide legal representation to an ANC commissioner or former commissioner who is sued or is threatened with a suit in connection with his or her official ANC duties and responsibilities. If a commissioner or former commissioner is sued or is threatened with suit in regard to an ANC matter and desires legal representation by the Office of the Corporation Counsel, the commissioner or former commissioner should promptly contact Martin Grossman, Deputy Corporation Counsel, General Litigation Division, Suite 630, 441 4th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001 (Tel. 727-6295). The Office of the Corporation Counsel may provide legal representation to a commissioner or former commissioner in connection with an ANC matter in circumstances other than those described above, if such representation is deemed by this Office to be in the interest of the District of Columbia government.

cc: The Honorable Kathleen Patterson  
Chairperson,  
Committee on Government operations  
Council of the District of Columbia

William P. Vazquez  
Director  
Office of the Ombudsman

Ayo Bryant  
Director  
Office of Diversity and Special Services

Anthony Cooper  
D.C. Auditor