



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 8, 2015

Mr. James R. Evans, Jr.
Counsel for the Walker County Appraisal District
Hargrove & Evans, LLP
4425 Mopac South, Building 3, Suite 400
Austin, Texas 78735

OR2015-11140

Dear Mr. Evans:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 566289.

The Walker County Appraisal District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for five categories of information related to tax-exempt properties, to include information related to the status of specified properties as "clergy residences." You indicate you have released or will release some information to the requestor. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as section 22.27 of the Tax Code, which provides, in pertinent part:

- (a) Rendition statements, real and personal property reports, attachments to those statements and reports, and other information the owner of property provides to the appraisal office in connection with the appraisal of the property, including income and expense information related to a property filed with an appraisal office and information voluntarily disclosed to an appraisal office or the comptroller about real or personal property sales prices after a promise it will be held confidential, are confidential and not open to public inspection. The statements and reports and the information they contain about specific real or personal property or a specific real or personal property owner and information voluntarily disclosed to an appraisal office

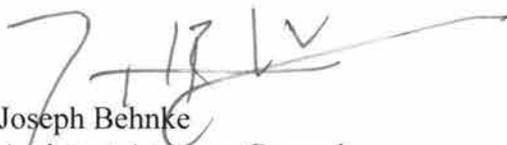
about real or personal property sales prices after a promise it will be held confidential may not be disclosed to anyone other than an employee of the appraisal office who appraises property except as authorized by Subsection (b) of this section.

Tax Code § 22.27(a). You state the submitted information was furnished to the district by the owner of the property at issue in connection with the appraisal of the property. You indicate the information at issue was not submitted under a promise of confidentiality. However, you argue the language of section 22.27(a) is written such that the requirement of a promise of confidentiality applies only to information voluntarily disclosed about sales prices. Therefore, you argue although the requested information may not have been disclosed under a promise of confidentiality, the information is nonetheless confidential under section 22.27(a) because it is information submitted by the property owner in connection with the appraisal of property and does not consist of voluntarily disclosed sales price information. After considering your arguments and reviewing the statutory language, we agree the promise of confidentiality requirement in section 22.27(a) pertains only to voluntarily disclosed sales price information. Accordingly, based on your arguments and our review of the requested information, we find the submitted information is confidential under section 22.27(a) of the Tax Code and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Joseph Behnke
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JB/som

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure.

Ref: ID# 566289

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)