



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 27, 2015

Ms. Criselda Palacios
City Attorney
City of Edinburg
P.O. Box 1079
Edinburg, Texas 78540

OR2015-15226

Dear Ms. Palacios:

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# 572999.

The City of Edinburg (the "city") received a request for the design plans at a specified address. Although you take no position on the submitted information, you state release of this information may implicate the proprietary interest of Distinctive Drafting & Design, Montemayor, Hansen, Garcia, Villafranco & Associates, and a named individual. Accordingly, you state you notified these parties of the request for information and of their rights to submit arguments to this office as to why the information at issue should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances). We have reviewed the submitted information.

An interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) of the Government Code to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from any of the notified third parties explaining why the submitted

information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude any of the parties have protected proprietary interests in the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish prima facie case that information is trade secret). 542 at 3. Accordingly, the city may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest a notified party may have in the information.

We note, the submitted information may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; *see* Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit. Accordingly, the city must release the submitted information; however, any information subject to copyright may be released only in accordance with copyright law.

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,



Cole Hutchison
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CH/som

Ref: ID# 572999

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Distinctive Drafting & Design
2404 South Expressway 83, Suite E
Harlingen, Texas 78552
(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Juan M. Rivas
Victory Custom Homes
703 Miguel Hidalgo
San Juan, Texas 78589
(w/o enclosures)

Montemayor, Hansen, Garcia,
Villafranco & Associates
6491 Paredes Line Road
Brownsville, Texas 78526
(w/o enclosures)