



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 10, 2015

Ms. Diane K. McCarthy
Legal Counsel
Harris County Appraisal District
P.O. Box 920975
Houston, Texas 77292-0975

OR2015-23625

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

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# 586575 (HCAD Ref. No. 15-3551).

The Harris County Appraisal District (the "district") received a request for a specified file relating to a specified location. The district claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exception the district claims 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. Section 22.27 of the Tax Code provides the following:

(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

¹The district acknowledges, and we agree, it did not comply with section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting this decision. See Gov't Code § 552.301(b). Nevertheless, because the exception the district claims can provide a compelling reason to overcome the presumption of openness, we will consider the district's claimed exception for the submitted information. See *id.* §§ 552.007, .302, .352.

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). We understand the district is an “appraisal office” for purposes of section 22.27(a). The district states the submitted information was provided by the property owner as part of information rendered to the district pursuant to section 22.27(a) of the Tax Code. Based on the district representation and our review, we find the information is subject to section 22.27. Accordingly, the district must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 22.27(a) of the Tax Code.

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,



David L. Wheelus
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

DLW/bhf

Ref: ID# 586575

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)