



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

August 12, 2008

Mr. Anthony J. Sadberry
Executive Director
Texas Lottery Commission
P.O. Box 16630
Austin, Texas 78761-6630

OR2008-10978

Dear Mr. Sadberry:

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# 318587.

The Texas Lottery Commission (the "commission") received a request for the Tolbert Family Trust agreement. You state that you have released some of the information. You state, and provide documentation showing, that you have notified the Tolbert Family Trust (the "trust") of the request and of its opportunity to submit comments to this office as to why the requested information should not be released to the requestor. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (determining that statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain the applicability of exception to disclose under Act in certain circumstances). As of the date of this letter, we have not receive comments from the trust explaining why the requested information should not be released. We have reviewed the submitted information.

The commission asserts that the submitted information is public information because it was collected, assembled, or maintained in connection with the transaction of official business. *See* Gov't Code § 552.002. We agree that the submitted trust agreement is public information subject to the Act. Accordingly, this information must be released, unless it falls within the scope of an exception to disclosure. *See id.* §§ 552.002(a), .021.

The commission also states that the “only exception to disclosure of information related to the claim process or the prize winner [is found in] section 466.022 of the [Government Code].” Section 466.022 of the Government Code provides in part:

(a) Except as otherwise provided by law, all commission records are subject to public inspection in accordance with Chapter 552.

(b) In addition to commission records excepted from disclosure under Chapter 552, the following information is confidential and is exempt from disclosure:

...

(3) the street address and telephone number of a prize winner, if the prize winner has not consented to the release of the information.

Id. § 466.022(a), (b)(3). In particular, the commission states that “only the street address and the telephone number of a prize winner are confidential.” *See id.* § 466.022(b)(3). We note, however, that section 466.022(b) provides that commission records are subject to the exceptions found in the Act. *See id.* § 466.022(b); *see also id.* § 466.022(a). We further note that section 552.101 of the Government Code is one of these exceptions.

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 common-law privacy which protects information if (1) the information contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) the information is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). This office has found that information that reflects an individual’s personal financial decisions and is not related to a financial transaction between the individual and a governmental body is protected by common-law privacy. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 600 (1992), 545 (1990)*. Upon review, we conclude that the submitted information reflects the trustors’ personal financial decisions and does not involve a financial transaction between them and a governmental body. Therefore, the submitted information is excepted from public disclosure under section 552.101 in conjunction with the common-law privacy.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov’t Code § 552.301(f). If the

governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must file suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such a challenge, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3). If the governmental body does not file suit over this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can challenge that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Olivia A. Maceo
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

OM/mcf

Ref: ID# 318587

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Xuan Musulin
Information Group Manager
Seneca One Finance, Inc.
7920 Norfolk Avenue, Suite 300
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
(w/o enclosures)

c: Mr. Kurt M. Andreason
Andreason Law Firm, P.L.L.C.
P.O. Box 19429
Sugar Land, Texas 77496
(w/o enclosures)