



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 31, 2011

Mr. David H. Guerra
King, Guerra, Davis & Garcia
P.O. Box 1025
Mission, Texas 78573

OR2011-01572

Dear Mr. Guerra:

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# 408011.

The City of Mission (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for records pertaining to the construction, city inspections, and city zoning of five specified residences. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Danze & Davis Architects, Inc. ("Danze"), DEH Structural Engineering, Inc. ("DEH"), and D. R. Horton. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified Danze, DEH, and D. R. Horton of the request for information and of their rights to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information 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) 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 Danze, DEH, or D. R. Horton explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude any of these third parties has a protected proprietary interest 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 (1990). Accordingly, the city may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest Danze, DEH, or D. R. Horton may have in the information.

We note some of the materials at issue 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. Thus, 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.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, 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 must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/tf

Ref: ID# 408011

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Danze & Davis Architects, Inc.
4701 Spicewood Springs Road, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78759
(w/o enclosures)

DEH Structural Engineering, Inc.
2710 Treble Creek, Suite 100
San Antonio, Texas 78258
(w/o enclosures)

D. R. Horton
1524 North McColl, Suite 150
McAllen, Texas 78501
(w/o enclosures)