



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 23, 2011

Mr. Eric D. Bentley
Assistant General Counsel
University of Houston System
311 E. Cullen Building
Houston, Texas 77204-2028

OR2011-07221

Dear Mr. Bentley:

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# 418411 (OGC# IR01970).

The University of Houston (the "university") received a request for information submitted in response to RFQ No.: RFQ783-DI09022010. Although you state the university takes no position with respect to the public availability of the submitted proposal information, you state its release may implicate the proprietary interests of several interested third parties. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, the university notified Allen & O'Hara Development Company, LLC; Ambling University Development Group; American Campus Communities; Asset Plus Companies; Guefen Development Company with CBMJ Investments & Development, LLC; Collegiate Builders; and Place Properties of the request and of each company's right 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) (determining 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).* 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 any of the notified third parties explaining why their submitted proposal information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude any of the third parties have protected proprietary interests in their 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. Consequently, the university may not withhold any of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interests the notified third parties may have in the information.

We note some of Place Properties's 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 submitted information must be released, but any of Place Properties's information protected by copyright must be released 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,



Leah B. Wingerson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LBW/dls

Ref: ID# 418411

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Allen & O'Hara Development Company, L.L.C.
Ambling University Development Group
American Campus Communities
Asset Plus Companies
Guefen Development Company with
 CBMJ Investments & Development, L.L.C.
Collegiate Builders
Place Properties

c/o Mr. Eric D. Bentley
Assistant General Counsel
University of Houston System
311 E. Cullen Building
Houston, Texas 77204-2028