



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

June 6, 2012

Ms. Lillian Guillen Graham
Assistant City Attorney
City of Mesquite
P.O. Box 850137
Mesquite, Texas 75185-0137

OR2012-08679

Dear Ms. Graham:

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# 455660.

The Mesquite Police Department (the "department") received a request for all dash cam video and audio recordings pertaining to a specified accident. You state you have released the requested audio recordings. You also state the department will redact Texas license plate numbers under section 552.130(a)(2) of the Government Code pursuant to the previous determination in Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009).¹ You claim that portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim 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." This section encompasses information made confidential by other statutes, including section 143.090 of the Local Government Code. You state the City of Mesquite is a civil service city under chapter 143 of the Local Government Code. Section 143.090 provides as follows:

A department, [the Fire Fighters' and Police Officers' Civil Service Commission], or municipality may not release a photograph that depicts a police officer unless:

¹Open Records Decision No. 684 is a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold ten categories of information, including a Texas license plate number under section 552.130(a)(2) of the Government Code, without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

- (1) the officer has been charged with an offense by indictment or by information;
- (2) the officer is a party in a civil service hearing or a case before a hearing examiner or in arbitration;
- (3) the photograph is introduced as evidence in a judicial proceeding;
or
- (4) the officer gives written consent to the release of the photograph.

Local Gov't Code § 143.090. You assert the submitted video recordings contain visual images of police officers that are confidential under section 143.090. However, the legislative history for section 143.090 indicates the legislature did not intend to extend the statute's protection to video recordings. Hearings on H.B. 2006 Before the House Comm. on Urban Affairs, 82nd Leg., R.S. (March 30, 2011) (bill's author, Rep. Bonnen, explained statute's protection limited to photographs and does not protect video). Accordingly, we conclude no portion of the video recordings is confidential under section 143.090, and the department may not withhold any of it under section 552.101 on that ground. Thus, the department must release the submitted information to the requestor.

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,



Vanessa Burgess
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

VB/dls

Ref: ID# 455660

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)