



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

August 22, 2014

Ms. Cara Leahy White  
Taylor Olson Adkins Sralla Elam L.L.P.  
6000 Western Place, Suite 200  
Fort Worth, Texas 76107-4654

OR2014-14854

Dear Ms. White:

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# 534013.

The Town of Flower Mound (the "town"), which you represent, received a request for information inquiring who called in a report regarding an inoperable vehicle at a specific address. You claim 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.

Initially, we note the requestor only seeks the identity of the person who made the specified complaint. We note the submitted information contains information beyond the requested information. Accordingly, the submitted information that does not identify the complainant is not responsive to the instant request. This ruling does not address the public availability of non-responsive information, and the town is not required to release such information in response to this request.

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. You raise section 552.101 in conjunction with the common-law informer's privilege, which Texas courts have long recognized. *See Aguilar v. State*, 444

S.W.2d 935, 937 (Tex. Crim. App. 1969). The informer's privilege protects from disclosure the identities of persons who report activities over which the governmental body has criminal or quasi-criminal law-enforcement authority, provided the subject of the information does not already know the informer's identity. *See* Open Records Decision No. 208 at 1-2 (1978). The informer's privilege protects the identities of individuals who report violations of statutes to the police or similar law-enforcement agencies, as well as those who report violations of statutes with civil or criminal penalties to "administrative officials having a duty of inspection or of law enforcement within their particular spheres." Open Records Decision No. 279 at 1-2 (1981) (citing 8 John H. Wigmore, *Evidence in Trials at Common Law*, § 2374, at 767 (J. McNaughton Rev. Ed. 1961)). The report must be of a violation of a criminal or civil statute. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 582 at 2 (1990), 515 at 4 (1988).

You state the responsive information identifies a person who reported activities over which the town has law enforcement authority. You further state the individual reported a possible violation of ordinances regulating inoperable vehicles. You indicate a violation of these ordinances carries civil or criminal penalties. There is no indication the subject of the complaint knows the identity of the informer. Based upon your representations and our review, we conclude the common-law informer's privilege is applicable. Therefore, the town may withhold the responsive information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the common-law informer's privilege.

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](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,



Rahat Huq  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

RSH/ds

Ref: ID# 534013

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)