



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 10, 2017

Ms. Ann-Marie Sheely
Assistant County Attorney
Travis County
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767

OR2017-25755

Dear Ms. Sheely:

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# 684155.

The Travis County Commissioners Court (the "county") received a request for all contracts and communications between the county and Republic of Texas Biker Rally, Inc. ("ROTBR") and documents pertaining to liability insurance regarding a specified event. We understand the county is withholding insurance policy numbers under section 552.136(c) of the Government Code.¹ 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 ROTBR. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, the county notified ROTBR of the request for information and of its 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) (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

¹Section 552.136(c) of the Government Code permits a governmental body to withhold the information described in section 552.136(b) without the necessity of seeking a decision from this office. *See Gov't Code § 552.136(c)*. If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.136(e). *See id.* § 552.136(d), (e).

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 ROTBR explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude ROTBR 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. Accordingly, the county may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest ROTBR may have in it.

We note some of the information at issue appears to 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. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the county must release the submitted information; however, the county may only release any information subject to copyright 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.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,



Kieran Hillis
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KH/sb

Ref: ID# 684155

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

1 Third Party
(w/o enclosures)