



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 28, 2019

Mr. Lance Kennedy
Counsel for the City of Mineral Wells
Messer, Rockefeller & Fort, PLLC
6371 Preston Road, Suite 200
Frisco, Texas 75034

OR2019-05530

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

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# 759368 (ORR ID: MW120618RC).

The City of Mineral Wells (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You state the city has released some information. You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exceptions 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." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). Under the common-law right of privacy, an individual has a right to be free from the publicizing of private affairs in which the public has no legitimate concern. *Id.* at 682. The court of appeals has concluded public citizens' dates of birth are protected by common-law privacy pursuant to section 552.101. *Paxton v. City of Dallas*, No. 03-13-00546-CV, 2015 WL

¹We note, and you acknowledge, the city failed to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting a decision from this office. See Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). Nonetheless, sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code can provide compelling reasons to overcome the presumption of openness caused by failure to comply with section 552.301. See *id.* §§ 552.007, .302. Thus, we will address the applicability of these exceptions to the submitted information, notwithstanding the city's violation of section 552.301 in requesting this decision.

3394061, at *3 (Tex. App.—Austin May 22, 2015, pet. denied) (mem. op.). Thus, the city must withhold the public citizen's date of birth you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130. Accordingly, the city must withhold the motor vehicle record information you marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the city must withhold the public citizen's date of birth you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The city must withhold the motor vehicle record information you marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The city must release the remaining information.

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/mo

Ref: ID# 759368

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)