

CHAPTER 14

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

**14-1-1 PUBLIC RECORDS AVAILABLE.** To the extent required by the Freedom of Information Act, **5 ILCS 140-1 et seq.** the City shall make available to any person for inspection or copying all public records, except as otherwise provided in Section 7 of the Freedom of Information Act, **5 ILCSA 140/7.**

**14-1-2 DESIGNATION, DUTIES AND TRAINING OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT OFFICERS.**

(A) The City Administrative Assistant and the Utility Billing Clerk are hereby designated to act as Freedom of Information Officers. The Freedom of Information Officers shall receive requests submitted to the City under the Freedom of Information Act, insure that the City responds to requests in a timely fashion, and issue responses under the Freedom of Information Act. The Freedom of Information officer shall develop a list of documents or categories of records that the City shall immediately disclose upon request.

(B) Upon receiving a request for a public record, the Freedom of Information Officer shall:

- (1) Note the date the City receives the written request;
- (2) Compute the date on which the period for response will expire and make a notation of that date on the written request;
- (3) Maintain an electronic or paper copy of the written request including all documents submitted with the request until the request has been complied with or denied; and
- (4) Create a file for the retention of the original request, a copy of the response, a record of written communications with the person making the request, and a copy of other communications regarding the request.

(C) The Freedom of Information Act officers shall, by **June 30, 2010**, successfully complete an electronic training curriculum to be developed by the Public Access Counselor in the office of the Attorney General of the State of Illinois and thereafter successfully complete an annual training program. Thereafter when a new Freedom of Information officer is designated by the City, that person shall successfully complete the electronic training curriculum within **thirty (30) days** after assuming the position. Successful completion of the required training curriculum within the periods provided shall be a prerequisite to continue serving as a Freedom of Information officer.

**14-1-3 PROCEDURES.** The City shall prominently display at the City Clerk's office, display on its website, make available for inspection and copying, and send through the mail as requested, each of the following:

(A) A brief description of the City, which will include, but not be limited to a block diagram giving its functional departments, the total amount of its operating budget, the number and location of all of its separate offices, the approximate number of full and part-time employees and the identification and membership of any board, commission, committee or council which operates in an advisory capacity relative to the operation of the City, or which exercises control over its policies or procedures; and

(B) A brief description of the methods whereby the public may request information and public records, a directory designating the Freedom of Information officers, the address where request for public records should be directed, and the fees relating thereto.

**14-1-4 REQUESTS TO INSPECT OR COPY.** All requests to inspect or copy records or documents prepared, maintained or under the control of the City shall be made in the following manner:

(A) All requests shall be in writing, shall state with reasonable particularity what records are to be inspected or copied, shall state whether the records are requested for a commercial purpose, and shall be signed by the person making the request. The request may be, but is not required to be, submitted on a form provided by the City.

(B) The written request shall be submitted to the Utility Billing Clerk or to the City Administrative Assistant. If neither the Utility Billing Clerk nor the City Administrative Assistant is available, the request shall be submitted to any employee of the City acting under the direction of the City Administrative Assistant.

(C) The Utility Billing Clerk, City Administrative Assistant or City employee receiving the request shall date stamp the request and indicate the date by which a response to the request must be made.

(D) Each request for other than commercial purposes shall be granted or denied in writing within **five (5) business days** after its receipt by the City, except as hereafter stated. The failure to grant or deny a request within **five (5) business days** shall operate as a denial, except as provided hereinbelow.

(E) The time limit set forth hereinabove may be extended for an additional **five (5) business days** by notice in writing to the person making the request of the **five (5) business days** extension. The notification shall state the reason(s) for the **five (5) business day's** extension and contain a date certain on which the requested record(s) will be available. The failure to grant or deny a request within the additional **five (5) business days** shall operate as a denial. The person making the request and the City may agree in writing to extend the time for compliance for a period to be determined by the parties. If the person making the request and the City agree to extend the period for compliance, a failure by the City to comply with any previous deadlines shall not be treated as a denial of the request for the records.

(F) Charges for copies of records and/or documents shall be imposed in accordance with the following:

- (1) No fees shall be charged for the first **fifty (50) pages** of black and white, letter or legal sized copies requested.
- (2) **Fifteen Cents (\$0.15)** for one-sided page for each black and white, letter, legal sized or 11" x 17" copy requested.
- (3) **One Dollar (\$1.00)** for each certified copy requested.
- (4) **Ten Cents (\$0.10)** for each audio recording.

(G) It shall be the responsibility of the person making the request to pick up the requested documents at City Hall. If the person making the request asks the City to mail the documents, he or she shall provide the City with his/her correct mailing address so as to efficiently process all requests. Copies of records requested to be mailed will be forwarded United States Certified Mail to the address provided. Pre-payment of **Two Dollars Fifty Cents (\$2.50)** per ounce shall be required.

(H) When a person requests a copy of a record maintained in an electronic format, the City shall furnish it in the electronic format specified by the person making the request, if feasible. If it is not feasible to furnish the public records in the specified electronic format, then the City shall furnish it in the format in which it is maintained by the City, or in paper format at the option of the person making the request.

**14-1-5 REQUEST FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES.** The City shall respond to a request for records to be used for a commercial purpose within **twenty-one (21) working days** after receipt. The response shall (1) provide to the person making the request an estimate of the time required by the City to provide the records requested and an estimate of the fees to be charged, which the City may require the person to pay in full before copying the requested documents, (2) deny the request pursuant to **one (1)** or more of the exemptions set out in the Freedom of Information Act, **5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.**, (3) notify the person making the request that the request is unduly burdensome and extend an opportunity to the person making the request to attempt to reduce the request to manageable portions, or (4) provide the records requested.

Unless the records are exempt from disclosure, the City shall comply with a commercial request within a reasonable period considering the size and complexity of the request, and giving priority to records requested for non-commercial purposes.

It is unlawful for a person to knowingly obtain a public record for a commercial purpose within disclosing that it is for a commercial purpose, and any person obtaining a public record for commercial purpose without disclosing that it is for a commercial purpose shall be fined in accordance with the City Code.

**14-1-6 FEES.** The City Clerk shall determine when the established fees are subject to waiver or reduction because the release of the requested information is in the public interest.

**14-1-7 PUBLIC FILE.** The City Clerk shall establish and maintain a central file, open to the public, of all denials of requests for records which shall be indexed according to the exemption utilized to deny a request for records, and to the extent possible, according to the types of records requested.

**14-1-8 GRANTING OR DENIAL OF REQUESTS.** A request for all records within a category shall be granted unless the request constitutes an undue burden upon the City. Prior to denying a request based upon the burdensome nature of the request, an opportunity to narrow the request to manageable proportions shall be provided. If the attempt to narrow the request fails, the request may be denied because compliance will unduly burden the operations of the City and the burden outweighs the public interest in the information. The denial shall be in writing, specifying the reasons why compliance will be unduly burdensome and the extent to which compliance will so burden the operations of the City. Repeated requests from the same person for the same records that are unchanged or identical to records previously provided are properly denied under the Freedom of Information Act shall be deemed unduly burdensome under this Section.

**14-1-9 CERTAIN INFORMATION EXEMPT FROM INSPECTION AND COPYING.** If any record exempt from disclosure contains material which is not exempt, the information which is exempt shall be deleted and the remaining information shall be available for inspection and copying.

**14-1-10 NOTICE OF DENIAL OF REQUEST; APPEALS.**  
(A) If the City denies the request, the City shall notify the person making the request in writing of:

- (1) the decision to deny the request;
- (2) the reasons for the denial, including a detailed factual basis for the application of any exemption claim;
- (3) the names and titles or positions of each person responsible for the denial;
- (4) the right to review by the Public Access Counselor and the address and phone number for the Public Access Counselor; and
- (5) the right to judicial review.

If an exemption is claimed, then the denial must include the specific reasons for the denial, including a detailed factual basis and a citation to support a legal authority.

(B) If the City asserts an exemption under Subsection (1)(c) or (1)(f) of Section 7 of the Freedom of Information Act, it shall, within the time periods provided for Respondent to request, provide written notice to the person making the request and the Public Access Counselor of its intent to deny the request in whole or in part. The notice shall include:

- (1) a copy of the request for access to records;
- (2) the proposed response from the City;
- (3) a detailed summary of the City's basis for asserting its exemption.

If the Public Access Counselor determines that further inquiry is warranted, the procedures set forth in the Freedom of Information Act, as amended from time to time, regarding the review of denials shall be applicable. Times for response compliance by the City to the request shall be tolled until the Public Access Counselor concludes his or her inquiry.

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