

March 3, 2016

VIA E-MAIL

Mr. Daniel Hamilton
Brown, Hay & Stephens, LLP
Email: dhamilton@bhslaw.com

RE: 16-FOIA-040 Davidoff Communications 5/1/2015 – 5/30/2015

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

We are in receipt of your request for information pursuant to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/1 *et seq.* (“**FOIA**”).

I. Background

On February 18, 2016, we received your request for:

Copies of any and all communications, recommendations, and documents related to work performed by the firm Davidoff Communications on behalf of or in any way related to Metra, dated or occurring on or a date between May 1, 2015 and May 30, 2015. This request shall include, but not be limited to: (1) any and all communications by and between Davidoff Communications (or any intermediary acting on or behalf of Davidoff Communications) and Metra staff, Metra Officials, Metra Officers, Agents of Metra, Metra Board Members (or any intermediary acting on or behalf of Metra staff, Metra Officials, Metra Officers, Agents of Metra, Metra Board Members); and (2) any and all recommendations and / or documents provided by or to Davidoff Communications by or to any Metra staff, Metra Officials, Metra Officers, Agents of Metra, Metra Board Members (or any intermediary acting on or behalf of Davidoff Communications, Metra staff, Metra Officials, Metra Officers, Agents of Metra, Metra Board Members)

(“**Request**”). Your Request is granted in part and denied in part.

II. Responsive Documents

In response to your Request, Metra is providing you all communications and documents between Davidoff Communications and Metra personnel between May 1 – May 30, 2015 (“**Responsive Documents**”).

III. Partial Denial

While FOIA requires public bodies to provide access to public records generally, FOIA also authorizes units of government to withhold certain information. Therefore, Attorney Thomas Stuebner has determined that the following portions of the Responsive Documents are exempt from disclosure under certain provisions of FOIA:

1. Personal telephone phone numbers mentioned in the Responsive Document are being redacted because they are exempt from disclosure under Section 7(1)(b) of FOIA, which exempts "private information." "[P]ersonal telephone numbers" are specifically mentioned within the definition of "private information" found in Section 2(c-5) of FOIA.

2. Certain portions of emails and documents contained within the Responsive Documents, express recommendations or opinions which have been redacted under Section 7(1)(f) of FOIA. Section 7(1)(f) exempts from disclosure any “[p]reliminary drafts, notes, recommendations, memoranda and other records in which opinions are expressed, or policies or actions are formulated ...[.]” 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(f). As such, Attorney Thomas Stuebner has determined that the aforementioned portions of emails and documents are properly redacted under Section 7(1)(f) of FOIA.
3. Certain portions of emails contained within the Responsive Documents contain personal information which has been redacted because it is exempt from disclosure under Section 7(1)(c) of FOIA. Section 7(1)(c) exempts “personal information contained within public records, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy....” Section 7(1)(c) goes on to say that, “Unwarranted invasion of personal privacy’ means the disclosure of information that is highly personal or objectionable to a reasonable person and in which the subject’s right to privacy outweighs any legitimate public interest in obtaining the information.” It has been determined that the aforementioned data falls squarely within that definition and its redaction is appropriate under FOIA.

IV. Right of Review

You have the right to have the partial denial of your Request reviewed by the Public Access Counselor (“PAC”) of the Illinois Attorney General’s Office. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(a). You can file your Request for Review with the PAC by writing to:

Public Access Counselor
Office of the Attorney General
500 South 2nd Street
Springfield, Illinois 62706
Fax: 217-782-1396
E-mail: publicaccess@atg.state.il.us.

If you choose to file a Request for Review with the PAC, you must do so within 60 calendar days of the date of this partial denial letter. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(a). Please note that you must include a copy of your original FOIA request and this partial denial letter when filing a Request for Review with the PAC.

You also have the right to seek judicial review of your partial denial by filing a lawsuit in the circuit court. 5 ILCS 140/11.

If I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Kathleen E. Haton
Freedom of Information Officer
FOIA@metrarr.com

Attachment