

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO



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August 26, 2019

*Sent via email (72902-46637773@requests.muckrock.com)*

Re: Petition to Supervisor of Records

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter responds to your petition to the Supervisor of Records concerning your May 8, 2019 request to the Mayor's Office for the following:

an electronic copy, in the original electronic format, with all calendar item headers, email addresses, metadata, timestamps, attachments, appendices, exhibits, and inline images, except those explicitly exempted by the Ordinance, of the Mayor's calendar, with all items, from April 28 to May 4, 2019 (inclusive).

In response to this request, the Mayor's Office produced the Mayor's calendar entries in PDF format from the time period at issue. The Mayor's Office explained that it provided the records in PDF format for ease of transferability and to protect the security of the original record, citing Government Code Section 6253.9.

Under the Sunshine Ordinance (Section 67.21(d) of the Administrative Code), the Supervisor of Records is responsible for determining whether a City department has withheld a record, or any part of a record, without a lawful basis for doing so – for determining “whether the record requested, or any part of the record requested, is public.” You contend that the Mayor's Office improperly withheld headers, email addresses, metadata, timestamps, attachments, appendices, exhibits, and inline images from its response to your request.

We understand that the responsive calendar entries include no email addresses, attachments, appendices, exhibits, or inline images, and thus the Mayor's Office did not improperly withhold this information.

With regard to metadata, which we understand would include headers and timestamps, we conclude that the Mayor's Office properly withheld this information.

First, you contend that the Mayor's Office should provide this information by producing the calendar entries in the “original electronic format.” But you also request that the calendar entries be exported to “.ics, iCalendar, or vCard formats.” The Public Records Act does not require the Mayor's Office to produce records in a format that it does not store them unless the Mayor's Office has used the records in the requested format or provided them in the requested format to another agency. Gov't Code § 6253.9. We understand that the Mayor's Office does not hold the records in any of these formats, and it has not used any of these formats or provided

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the records in these formats to any agency. By contrast, the Mayor's Office does store calendar entries in PDF format, and it has used that format to provide the records in the past.

Second, the Mayor's Office has determined that disclosure of the metadata associated with the original electronic files – whether by producing it in native format or disclosing the metadata in some other format – may jeopardize or compromise the security of the City's computer system. Thus the Mayor's Office may decline to produce the metadata under Government Code Section 6253.9(f). Also, the Mayor's Office has determined that metadata contained in original electronic files may include unique identifiers for individual computer terminals and computer servers and associated security certificates and similar information. This information is highly sensitive, as disclosing it could allow a hacker to penetrate the City's computer system, "spoof" emails and insert themselves into confidential and/or privileged discussions, or send unauthorized emails on behalf of city officials. Therefore the information may be withheld under Government Code section 6254.19. Given this security risk, the information may also be withheld because there is a substantial need for confidentiality that outweighs any interest the public may have in accessing this information. *See* Cal. Evid. Code § 1040; Gov't Code § 6254(k).

For the reasons stated above, your petition is denied.

Very truly yours,

DENNIS J. HERRERA  
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Deputy City Attorney