Texas Public Information Act & Texas Open Meetings Act: How They Work

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The Statutes

☐ Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA): Chapter 551, Texas Government Code

☐ Texas Public Information Act (TPIA): Chapter 552, Texas Government Code

■ Formerly known as the Texas Open Records Act

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TOMA Basics

☐ When a quorum of a governmental body meets, it must do so in public

☐ The governmental body must give sufficient prior notice of the time, place, and subject of the meeting

What is a "governmental body"?

☐ Definition in § 551.001

☐ Includes general definitions and specific examples

☐ Examples: county commissioners court; municipal governing body; school board

Descriptive definitions

☐ "a board, commission, department, committee, or agency within the executive or legislative branch of state government that is directed by one or more elected or appointed members"

☐ "a deliberative body that has rulemaking or quasi-judicial power and that is classified as a department, agency, or political subdivision of a county or municipality"

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5

TOMA's scope

☐ Does not cover the judiciary
- Public access to judicial proceedings sometimes mandated by the Constitution
- See also Rule 12, Rules of Judicial Administration

☐ Covers certain property owners' associations
- Only in Harris and adjacent counties

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6

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