

PUTNAM TOWNSHIP

FOIA Appeal Form

(To appeal a denial of records)

Michigan Freedom of Information Act, Public Act 442 of 1976, MCL 15.231, *et seq.*

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Firm/Organization: _____ Email: _____

Street address: _____ Fax: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Request for: Copy Certified copy Record inspection
 Subscription to record issued on regular basis

Delivery Method: Will pick up Will make own copies onsite Mail to above address
 Email to above address Deliver on digital media provided by the Township

Record(s) you requested. List here or attach copy of original requests:

Reason(s) for appeal

The appeal must identify the reasons for the denial. You may use this form or attach additional sheets:

Requestor's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Township response

The Township must provide a response within 10 business days after receiving this appeal, including a determination or taking one, 10-day extension.

Township extension: We are extending the date to respond to your FOIA appeal for no more than 10 business days, until _____ (month, day, year). Only one extension may be taken per FOIA appeal.

Unusual circumstances warranting extension:

If you have any questions regarding this extension, contact: _____

Township Determination

Denial reversed Denial upheld Denial reversed in part or upheld in part

The following previously denied record will be released:

For Office Use Only

Request number: _____ Date received: _____

Check if received via: Email Fax Walk in

Date delivered to junk/spam folder: _____ Date discovered in junk/spam folder: _____

Notice of Requestor's Right to Seek Judicial Review

You are entitled under Section 10 of the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, MCL 15.240, to appeal this denial to the Township board or to commence an action in the Circuit Court to compel disclosure of the requested record if you believe they were wrongfully withheld from disclosure. If, after judicial review, the court determines that the Township has not complied with MC 15.2345 in making this denial and orders disclosure of all or a portion of a public record, you have the right to receive attorney's fees and damages as provided in MCL 15.240. (See back of this form for additional information on your rights.)

Signature of FOIA Coordinator: _____ **Date:** _____

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (EXCERPT)

Act 442 of 1976

15.240 Options by requesting person; appeal; actions by public body; receipt of written appeal; judicial review; civil action; venue; de novo proceeding; burden of proof; private view of public record; contempt; assignment of action or appeal for hearing, trial, or argument; attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements; assessment of award; damages.

Sec. 10.

(1) If a public body makes a final determination to deny all or a portion of a request, the requesting person may do 1 of the following at his or her option:

- (a) Submit to the head of the public body a written appeal that specifically states the word "appeal" and identifies the reason or reasons for reversal of the denial.
- (b) Commence a civil action in the circuit court, or if the decision of a state public body is at issue, the court of claims, to compel the public body's disclosure of the public records within 180 days after a public body's final determination to deny a request.

(2) Within 10 business days after receiving a written appeal pursuant to subsection (1)(a), the head of a public body shall do 1 of the following:

- (a) Reverse the disclosure denial.
- (b) Issue a written notice to the requesting person upholding the disclosure denial.
- (c) Reverse the disclosure denial in part and issue a written notice to the requesting person upholding the disclosure denial in part.
- (d) Under unusual circumstances, issue a notice extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the head of the public body shall respond to the written appeal. The head of a public body shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular written appeal.

(3) A board or commission that is the head of a public body is not considered to have received a written appeal under subsection (2) until the first regularly scheduled meeting of that board or commission following submission of the written appeal under subsection (1)(a). If the head of the public body fails to respond to a written appeal pursuant to subsection (2), or if the head of the public body upholds all or a portion of the disclosure denial that is the subject of the written appeal, the requesting person may seek judicial review of the nondisclosure by commencing a civil action under subsection (1)(b).

(4) In an action commenced under subsection (1)(b), a court that determines a public record is not exempt from disclosure shall order the public body to cease withholding or to produce all or a portion of a public record

wrongfully withheld, regardless of the location of the public record. Venue for an action against a local public body is proper in the circuit court for the county in which the public record or an office of the public body is located has venue over the action. The court shall determine the matter de novo and the burden is on the public body to sustain its denial. The court, on its own motion, may view the public record in controversy in private before reaching a decision. Failure to comply with an order of the court may be punished as contempt of court.

(5) An action commenced under this section and an appeal from an action commenced under this section shall be assigned for hearing and trial or for argument at the earliest practicable date and expedited in every way.

(6) If a person asserting the right to inspect, copy, or receive a copy of all or a portion of a public record prevails in an action commenced under this section, the court shall award reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. If the person or public body prevails in part, the court may, in its discretion, award all or an appropriate portion of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. The award shall be assessed against the public body liable for damages under subsection (7).

(7) If the court determines in an action commenced under this section that the public body has arbitrarily and capriciously violated this act by refusal or delay in disclosing or providing copies of a public record, the court shall order the public body to pay a civil fine of \$1,000.00, which shall be deposited into the general fund of the state treasury. The court shall award, in addition to any actual or compensatory damages, punitive damages in the amount of \$1,000.00 to the person seeking the right to inspect or receive a copy of a public record. The damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public body that is not an individual and that kept or maintained the public record as part of its public function.

History: 1976, Act 442, Eff. Apr. 13, 1977 ;-- Am. 1978, Act 329, Imd. Eff. July 11, 1978 ;-- Am. 1996, Act 553, Eff. Mar. 31, 1997 ;-- Am. 2014, Act 563, Eff. July 1, 2015

Putnam Township

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