

Watchdog sues Coles County for Public Records –

COLES CO., IL. ([ECWd](#)) –

In the process of fielding complaints on massive hikes in assessed value of commercial real estate in Mattoon Township, I figured the first step would be to find out how the assessments were accomplished and what they used for their values.

I sent the Supervisor of Assessments (“SOA”) a Freedom Of Information Act (“FOIA”) request for a copy of the study conducted by the individual contracted to conduct the commercial assessments.

At first there was no answer, then the SOA wanted me to take records other than what I had requested, and then I was told the SOA sent the request to the contractor and State’s Attorney claiming the county didn’t possess any of the records, and work product of something like that.

The problem is that FOIA considers those records public records and requires the public body to retrieve them from the contractor:

5 ILCS 140/7(2) A public record that is not in the possession of a public body but is in the possession of a party with whom the agency has contracted to perform a governmental function on behalf of the public body, and that directly relates to the governmental function and is not otherwise exempt under this Act, shall be considered a public record of the public body, for purposes of this Act.

So I had to file suit today in Coles County Circuit Court. My hope is the County produce the requested records – read it below:



Help Us Keep
Shining The Light
On Local Governments