

Is there anything that isn't for sale?

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Editor,

I have to admit, like someone said long before me, "All I know is what I read in the papers." But I've also been told over the years that Jean Klock Park was given to the city of Benton Harbor by a grieving family named Klock, whose daughter had died. Her name was Jean. The property was intended for the people and never to be used for any other purpose. They put their trust in the city fathers. That, in a nutshell, is what I heard.

This was accepted as fact and adhered to until along comes a developer with grandiose ideas and the supposed backing of wealthy people who desire property - beautiful sandy beach property on Lake Michigan - that is unavailable anywhere else that upscale homes can be built on. It is property with a view of the lake and a ready beach that will have to be maintained by the people - the other, mostly low- to middle-income people who live and pay taxes in Benton Harbor. I'm sure the wealthy will insist that they are paying for that maintenance through their taxes, but any taxes in Benton Harbor gets spread pretty thin in all areas.

Anyone with any common sense knows that no one presently living in Benton Harbor is going to afford to live in this new development. Well, maybe one or two. Maybe.

Judge Fields was correct when he issued an injunction halting this injustice, but when you get some lawyers together, a word or two can suddenly make things a lot different than they seem. Remember the word "is"? One man put a pretty good spin on that one.

Why can't this developer and the folks waiting to buy his homes develop a subdivision closer into the city, where they could walk or ride a bike to the beach just like the rest of the population of Benton Harbor and the surrounding area?

Personally, I'm sorry to see that the Friends of Jean Klock Park caved in here at the suggestion of their lawyer. The real winners here are the ones with the big money. It will be interesting to see if any of these new residents run for public office in the city or ever see any streets, other than Main Street or the street they live on in Benton Harbor.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have the people who dedicated this property return to see what the politicians did with their trust?

They now say the rest of the park is protected in perpetuity. Wasn't that the original idea? Down the road another lawyer will find a loophole when the need arises. Money talks.

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