

Selling piece of park is offensive idea

Posted: Tuesday, October 14, 2003 12:00 am

Editor,

It has come to my attention that there is a movement to sell off a portion of Jean Klock Park for a housing development.

How anyone in this day and age - while America is waking up to the need to preserve the contributions of the past, when the need for awareness of native American gifts and black heritage are being recognized - can justify destroying the precious gift of park land for tawdry gain is beyond me.

J.N. Klock died before I was on the scene, but Mrs. Klock was a friend of my grandmother and Helen Polly Klock, the daughter, was a close friend of my parents and of me and my wife. My wife and I lived for a time in the Klock home on Pipestone. For years our family had been entertained there.

The Klocks had been founders of the Benton Harbor Congregation Church and I remember Mrs. Klock worshipping there, as did my family.

The death of Jean Klock, the older daughter, was a hard blow to the Klock family. They sought a means to honor and remember their child and did so with their tremendously generous gift to the whole community of the beautiful beach which bears her name. I remember there used to be a double road which ran its length and the proud pavilion which once stood at the center.

That the gift was for the whole community was evident, as not only both the black and white residents of Benton Harbor enjoyed it, but folks from the whole area, plus visitors from out of state crowded the beach on hot summer days.

Jean Klock Park was never intended to be housing development. Helen Polly Klock and her parents would never have dreamed that their gift would be turned into a source for cash. The promoters of the scheme to desecrate the purpose of the donors should be ashamed of themselves. Wise people will block their stupid actions.

This great shoreline park can never be replaced if it is used for housing. The people will be robbed of this great gift for the benefit of the rich few who would selfishly have exclusive beach property with a view. The comparatively tiny amount of money generated will do nothing to help Benton Harbor with its problems.

It is my prayer that sensible citizens will block this foolish giveaway and preserve Jean Klock Park in the form it was given.

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