

State grants preclude developing park

Posted: Friday, May 23, 2003 12:00 am

Editor,

I read with interest the May 21 article regarding the city of Benton Harbor's interest in possibly selling about 4 acres of Jean Klock Park for private development of upscale housing.

As a former grants coordinator and Program Manager of the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, I know the city has received at least two grants for development of Jean Klock Park, one from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and one from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Language in the project agreements for these grants requires the city to maintain the park for public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity. To sell the park property, or a portion of the park property, for private development would require replacement with property of equal value and usefulness.

Before the city officials make any binding commitment to sell Jean Klock Park property, I urge the city attorney to investigate the grant restrictions by contacting the Department of Natural Resources, Grants Administration Division.

Jeanne Powers

St. Johns, Mich.