

Don't sully Klock Park with upscale housing

Posted: Monday, May 26, 2003 12:00 am

Editor,

I am horrified that the Benton Harbor city "fathers," members of the City Commission, would consider selling any portion of Jean Klock Park.

As with Tiscornia Park, the Klock family gifted this land in memorial to their daughter, with stipulations, and these did not include turning it into an upscale suburban development. As Princella Tobias, editor of Benton Spirits, said at a meeting last week: "We have to look at the whole picture."

No question Benton Harbor needs money, and lots of it. However, the city has made real progress over the last few years. I truly believe it can once again be a tourist destination as it was in the 1940s and 1950s. Remember, tourism is one of the leading money makers in Michigan! I doubt people will go to see another suburban development which will alter the view of the lake - an irreplaceable vista.

The settlement history and the wetlands of the area are stories in themselves, and I remember when Jean Klock was thronged with people. The Arts District businesses are a real draw, so too the music festivals, and there are other examples of new hope and new money in Benton Harbor that are likely to be present for years to come.

The powers that be should look to the future and at the whole picture. If they observe the boarded-up houses in Benton Harbor, it should be proof positive that houses, like condos and large housing projects, don't last forever and become a costly burden to the community. Surely if the commission is successful in getting around the requests and stipulations the Klock family made with Benton Harbor, it is most unlikely that other city benefactors would step forward to offer thousands of dollars, in any form, to benefit the city.

Jean Klock Park is a piece of nature's wonder and a gift to the city of Benton Harbor. Keep it so for future generations; please! I hope others who feel as I do will take the time to write and speak your feelings. They were heard and respected for Tiscornia Park.

Do it today. An e-mail to The Herald-Palladium doesn't even require a stamp.

Janet S. McLelland

St. Joseph