

## Jean Klock Park covenant is very clear

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Editor,

In the city of Benton Harbor's attempt to revitalize its property tax revenue, leaders are seriously considering exploiting and defiling a natural gift that was gifted to them in trust by the bereaved family of Jean Klock, who lost their daughter to our great lake. In the covenant between the city and the family it clearly states that the property is to be maintained and protected by the city. (The park) "shall forever be used by the said city of Benton Harbor for bathing beach, park purposes, or other public purposes: and at all times shall be open for the use and benefit of the public, subject only to such rules and regulations as the said city may make and adopt."

This does not allow that the city may sell a portion of this property for a single-dwelling housing development, only that the city must protect and preserve this property in the state it was entrusted for present and future generations.

This proposal follows the senseless construction that took place there last summer that wasted state grant money. Didn't the city realize that by this new development there would be more to maintain of what they already couldn't on a busted budget? What was the point - Edgewater residents?

Just think, while everyone else has been locked out, they have access to it 24-7 and they don't even contribute to the city of Benton Harbor's tax base. Ever hear the phrase the more you have the less you have? Well now they have it.

Is money all that matters? To Allegretti Architects Inc., the answer is yes. The project will line their pockets well, but what will be lost in the process? It's insane to think that this plan will not affect the natural state of this property. They may try to soften this proposal by implying that only 5 percent of the total park would be used, but this 5 percent is irreplaceable as the city has no comparable property to exchange it with and odds are once a precedent has been set it will not stop there. If this takes place eventually all could be lost.

Not only did the May 21 article in The Herald-Palladium disclose this ludicrous residential plan, but in addition alluded to the possibility that this treasure is being considered as a handover to the county parks division. Do we need another Silver Beach?

As a former daughter of Benton Harbor residents and a resident of this county, I say "thanks, but no thanks." Legal or not, both the county's proposal and the city's desperate irrationality are in my opinion a nightmare.

This property is priceless, rare and belongs to us all. That was the Klock family's intent and myself and others have not forgotten 86 years later. Do we want to continue to lose our shoreline to opportunists and developers, or do we want to save this place of pristine serenity? I urge all of those who are concerned to become involved. Help the city of Benton Harbor to finally and forever see that they should leave the perfection of heaven on earth alone.

Carol Drake

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