

Plight of Klock Park stands as a travesty

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Editor,

I do not know all the circumstances existing when Jean Klock Park was donated to the city. Research at the library told me that the Klock family donated the beach in memory of their child, Jean, who died in infancy. Their intention was that the beach be for children to play freely and to be available to all without charge. It is not so now. No doubt they loved and respected the city to which they chose to donate this lovely beach.

I remember how our beautiful Jean Klock Park was when it was the most popular and most populated beach in our area. Little twisty roads took you in and you could park along the edge of the beach under numerous shade trees. Mother would open the back of the car and easily spread out our picnic supplies. She would take a plaid table cloth and spread it on the picnic tables conveniently located at the edge of the brick road just inside the sandy beach. While she lovingly prepared our meal and fired up the grills, also conveniently located with the family in mind, my brother and I would play on the sand dunes and then of course we would race to the water and splash and play until it was time for our wonderful meal. Later, as teenagers, we could lay our blankets around the large concession stand at the fork of the road as you came in. At that time the blankets and people sun bathing around this concession stand were hundreds. But what happened?

1) Someone seems to have decided that they should take this donated "free" beach and begin charging people to come in.

2) They decided to tear up the wonderful brick road that you could park on at the edge of the beach, and replace it with a board walk made of decking, thus spending our tax dollars and numerous grant moneys on a virtually deserted beach. Parking is no longer being available.

3) They put in an asphalt parking lot way outside the beach, so it is a very long walk to bring in picnic supplies.

4) There is no longer a concession stand.

5) There is no longer a pavilion.

Most of all there are no longer people coming to what was a beautiful, popular beach. By the way, when they tore up the brick road and started charging residents and outsiders, the end of the beach where you used to drive out was blocked off from the St. Joseph residents.

Now we must ask, who has the right to make such life-changing decisions concerning one's city? Would the Klock family have wanted this to happen to the beach they so graciously placed in the hands of the city fathers?

Further, I now hear that the city is trying to get the rights to sell pieces of this property for houses to be built on and tax dollars collected. Does that mean they want the beach to stay deserted so they can say this is a necessary choice that the city must make?

I don't know about you, but to me this whole picture looks wrong. If any of you can think of a way to turn it around and bring back this wonderful free beach that the Klocks donated to be used freely by the public, please help. Check the St. Joseph library to view newspaper articles concerning Jean Klock Beach.

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