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Jean Klock Park Plaintiffs Question Implications Of EFM Law

Andrew Green Reporting

Plaintiffs in a federal lawsuit over the use part of Jean Klock Park for the Harbor Shores golf course say that they're concerned about what Michigan's recently expanded emergency financial manager law could mean for the future of that lakefront property. Attorney Terry Lodge, who represents the residents who are challenging the legality of Benton Harbor's lease with Harbor Shores, said on Tuesday that he's sent a letter to the National Parks Service, asking that agency to work with state officials in ensuring any transactions to occur involving Jean Klock Park remain transparent. He says that he, and his clients, want to notify the Parks Service of any potential liquidation of Jean Klock Park as a preemptive measure to prevent a development like that from occurring. Although Benton Harbor Emergency Manager Joseph Harris has stated previously that he had no plans to sell off the park, Lodge notes that his recently expanded powers do "include the authority to liquidate assets without notification or consultation with anyone in the city." He adds that the National Parks Service would have to approve such a transaction, but "sales of public parks have occurred without requisite approvals being obtained in advance of their liquidation" in the past.

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