



Jean Klock Park's hours changed - twice

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BENTON HARBOR - A May order by Benton Harbor's emergency manager changing the hours of operation for Jean Klock Park has the Friends of Jean Klock Park up in arms.

But Emergency Manager Joseph Harris said the point is moot because he has changed the parks' hours to almost what they used to be. Harris said he made the change about two weeks ago.

Carol Drake, a founder of the organization, said in a news release this week that Harris' May order violated all of the following: the original deed that gave the park to the city, a 2004 consent judgment, the city charter and the lease agreement between the city and Harbor Shores.

Drake and Friends co-founder Clellen Bury sued the city and Harbor Shores a few years ago on the grounds that the golf course violated a 2004 consent agreement that said the park must be open for public use.

According to Harris' order posted on the city's website and signed May 4, the park is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. May 1 through Sept. 30 and is closed all other times.

Harris has since changed the hours to 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., but an order to that effect has not been posted to the city's website.

In a June 7 letter, Bury outlined the ways he thinks Harris' May 4 order violated the original deed, which said the park had to be open at all times, and the way it violates the 2004 consent agreement that was issued regarding a lawsuit between Benton Harbor and Drake and Bury. The agreement stated the city could sell a portion of the park as long as the rest was put aside for public use only and open for winter activities.

Harris said the charter allows the city to be reasonable about setting the park's hours.

Drake said the hours posted at the park were changed as she spoke with a TV reporter at Jean Klock Park Tuesday. When they arrived, there were two sets of park hours posted - a sign that gave the park's old hours, 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., and another posted in

the window of the ticket booth that gave the new hours, Drake said.

As Drake was speaking with the reporter, a person from the city came and took the sign posted in the window down.

Drake said she didn't know why the hours were changed in the first place or why they were changed again.

"I wouldn't have to put a press release out if he had answered my questions," Drake said.

Jean Klock Park's new hours are more in keeping with the hours of other area beaches. Silver Beach's hours, set by Berrien County, are 5 a.m. to sunset. St. Joseph's Lions and Tiscornia beaches are open from 6 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

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