

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 27, 2011**

## **Benton Harbor Emergency Manager Further Restricts Access to Jean Klock Park**

Contact Carol Drake, Friends of Jean Klock Park

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Joseph Harris, Benton Harbor City's Emergency Manager, has issued ORDER NO.: 11-11, limiting the times and dates that Jean Klock Park (JKP) will be open. The new hours are between 10:00 am till 10:00 pm, and the new dates are May 1st through September 30<sup>th</sup>. This order not only violates and conflicts with the Klock Deed but also with the 2004 Consent Judgment, the City Charter, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, and the lease agreement between the City and Harbor Shores. This order is another step in the systematic loss of access to the park for the citizens of Benton Harbor and general public.

"I am outraged that I have been stripped of my right to use my city park in the early morning summer hours, the time that I most enjoy the park", said Clellen Bury, lifetime resident of Benton Harbor. "I will be equally enraged if the park will be closed at all other times during the year except for the newly found tourist season. The Klock deed states that the park 'at all times shall be open for the use and benefit of the public'. The City Charter mandates that the park must be open between the hours of 7:00 am and 11:00 pm daily.

Mr. Bury addressed his displeasure regarding the new order in a letter to Mr. Harris dated June 7<sup>th</sup> which included further concerns about future access issues that undoubtedly will occur during the upcoming Whirlpool Steelhead Ironman Triathlon and the KitchenAid sponsored 2012 Senior PGA. Mr. Bury did not receive a response from Mr. Harris to his letter (attached).

Carol Drake, who along with Mr. Bury is a founder of the Friends of Jean Klock Park has additional concerns. "Not only have the citizens of Benton Harbor lost their right to have representation by their elected officials, but they are also gradually losing the historical access to and use of their public parkland. They have no input. Through his sole jurisdiction Joseph Harris has eroded the rights and privileges of the citizens. Is this being done to deprive the residents of access or is there another motive such as future privatization?"

For more information visit the '**State Appointed EFM**' page at:

[www.savejeanklockpark.org](http://www.savejeanklockpark.org)

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