



Confusing signs, confusing times at Jean Klock Park

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BENTON HARBOR — Friends of Jean Klock Park said the city did not comply with an agreement to keep the park open when they said they would, from 7 a.m. To 11 p.m.

At Jean Klock Park, there's no alcohol and no pets. Upon closer look, there is no clue about the park's hours at the beach.

Does the park open at 7 a.m., which is posted on a sign adjacent to the parking lot booth, or is it 10 a.m. until 10 p.m., which appeared on a sign in the booth?

A parking lot attendant removed a sign in the booth and told reporters "The sign is wrong"

It wasn't exactly clear what time the park closes for the night. The attendant told a driver the park closes at 11, even though all the signs say 10.

As a member of the activist group "Friend of Jean Klock Park," Carol Drake has been critical of the changes to Jean Klock and the neighboring Harbor Shores Golf course.

Drake read from her copy of the city charter. In it, she said, "Jean Klock Park and beach shall be open daily to the general public between the hours of 7 a.m. and 11 p.m."

Drake said it was only a week-and-a-half ago when the city began to comply with the park deed. Back then, the hours were 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

"The people of Benton Harbor have already lost their right to be represented by the public officials," said Drake. "Now, they're being stripped of their privileges to use their public land."

WSBT News talked to Emergency Financial Manager Joseph Harris, who confirmed the park's hours changed less than two weeks ago.

Harris said the park's hours were 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. for a year, because "...we wanted to make sure we had necessary patrols, but that's not an issue anymore. It doesn't make sense to open the park that late."

Harris said he received his share of questions about the 10 a.m. opening, which meant people could not enjoy the beach just after sunrise.

Drake received the same complaint.

"It's a beautiful time," Drake said. "Older people love it early in the morning."

She said the group's primary focus has been access.

"It belongs to the public, even the golf course belongs to the public," Drake said.

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