



CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2022

Downtown Decatur parks to be closed overnight

Decatur, IL – The City would like to make residents aware that Central Park and Preston Jackson Park in downtown Decatur will be closed to the public from 12 a.m. midnight to 6 a.m. each night. The City will begin enforcement only after appropriate signage is installed that states the new hours.

The Decatur City Council approved this change in an attempt to reduce vandalism, defacement, dumping of trash and debris, and other problems that most often are occurring overnight in downtown parks. The council added a one-year sunset to this ordinance so they can review the impact of this regulation after that period.

Since the downtown parks are often used as the venue for special events, festivals, fairs, etc., it is important that the City takes reasonable steps to keep its parks in good condition. We hope the community recognizes these wonderful assets and assists the City by following these hours of closure.

Being found in a downtown park after hours by Decatur Police will first result in education of the new hours and a request to leave the property and/or an offer of assistance in leaving. Only if police officers cannot obtain voluntary compliance could they, based on the officer discretion, choose to issue a \$25 citation. Again, the goal is keeping the City's downtown parks in good condition.

The City is committed to reducing the amount of damage in the parks late at night, as well as assisting individuals who attempt to stay overnight in the downtown parks. We have already coordinated with the Continuum of Care, local shelters, and other social service agencies to ensure individuals can be supported. The City will continue to ensure that shelters can meet any future needs, and that persons needing assistance receive the help they need.

Police are educated about the resources available and will be sensitive to persons appearing to have no place to go during restricted hours. Officers will attempt to connect individuals to our local shelters and other social services, depending on their needs.

The new ordinance will be enforced uniformly, unless there is a pre-approved evening event at one or both of the City's parks. We thank the community for its understanding and compliance.

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