



**PARKS COMMISSION  
Heman Park Community Center  
975 Pennsylvania**

**Tuesday, August 15, 2023  
6:30 p.m.**

**AGENDA**

- A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**
- B. ROLL CALL**
- C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - 1) June 20, 2023
- E. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**
- F. DEPARTMENT REPORT**
- G. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT**
- H. COMMISSION MEMBERS PARK INSPECTIONS REPORT**
- I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
  - 1) Parks Centennial Update
  - 2) Municipal Parks Planning Grant
- J. NEW BUSINESS**
  - 1) Heman Park Pool
  - 2) M. Felder Park Presentation
- K. COMMISSION COMMENTS**
- L. ADJOURNMENT**

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
PARK COMMISSION  
CITY OF UNIVERSITY CITY, ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI  
TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2023**

**Agenda Item A: Call Meeting to Order**

Park Commission President, James Wilke called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

**Agenda Item B: Roll Call**

Those in attendance included Commission President James Wilke, Commission Members Su Schmalz, Amy Gascon, Lisa Hummel, Carl Hoagland, and Patrick Fox. Also, in attendance was Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Darren Dunkle, Deputy Director of Parks Maintenance Todd Strubhart, and Deputy Director of Recreation Services Lynda Euell-Taylor. Those not in attendance included Council Liaison Steve McMahon.

**Agenda Item C: Approval of the Agenda**

Commission Member Hummel motioned, and Commission Member Fox seconded to approve the agenda. The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item D: Approval of the Minutes**

- 1) Commission Member Fox motioned, and Commission Member Hummel seconded to amend the minutes to Agenda Item H #5 to state: "Reported that there was a limb down that had been removed and that attention would need to be made at the water feature". The motion was approved.
- 2) Commission Member Hummel motioned, and Commission Member Fox motioned seconded to amend the minutes to Agenda Item J #1 to include "Further discussion took place regarding the status of the City of Clayton receiving resident rates and if the status could be amended or modified to reflect the rising cost of maintenance to the golf course". The motion was approved.
- 3) Commission Member Hummel motioned, and Commission Member Gascon seconded to amend the minutes to Agenda Item K – Commission Member Schmalz to state "Stated that we need to have the availability to have soccer camps at Centennial Commons". The motion was approved.

Commission Member Hummel motioned, and Commission Member Fox seconded to approve the amended minutes. The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item E: Citizen Comments**

- 1.) Ms. Samudra Haddad of 6633 Clemens Avenue Apt 2E spoke about Metcalfe Park and stated that the park is home to Canadian Geese and that there are EPA regulations regarding the Geese; That the park grounds were unstable and that areas puddle after rains; Stated that she would like to see a 440 yard natural trail around the park, but it should not be a hard surface; Stated that kids play on the playground and ballfields, and would not like the character of the park change and that she had concerns as to pickleball courts; Asked that the Commission take all of her comments into consideration.
- 2.) Mr. Mike Miller of 1331 Purdue Avenue stated that he had reviewed the 2008 Parks Master Plan and wondered if the Parks Commission had a sub-committee to look at upgrades and to consider top priorities versus bottom priorities; Asked why the city didn't have low costs amenities such as skate parks, disc golf course, horseshoes, and pickleball; and he asked if there were future plans for Greensfelder Park.

- 3.) Mr. Kevin Taylor of 7022 Canton Avenue spoke about Flood Restoration and in particular the responses to questions of moving the baseball field to another park and the affect it may have on the neighborhood, such as parking, etc.; Mr. Taylor also asked why we weren't talking to the UCity School District about a ballfield complex; Mr. Taylor stated that he understood the floodway/floodplain, however, the Commission needed to talk about bigger issues and not personal issues.

Mr. Taylor also pointed out the makeup of the Commission and stated that he wouldn't say it was racist, but the Commission never talks about the basketball courts at Centennial Commons and is it because of race or age, but the Commission seems to talk about pickleball.

#### **Agenda Item F: Department Report**

- 1) Mr. Dunkle reported that the city anticipated the opening of the pool on Saturday and that the pool hours would be from 12-6.
- 2) Commission Member Schmalz asked about the timing of the implementation of the RecTrac Software in June as this is a busy time at the Golf Course. Mr. Dunkle stated that due to several factors the implementation of the upgrade had been pushed back and as such June was the only time, we could begin implementation and that because of the high use of the golf course staff chose to begin the implementation there to make sure that we could get it up and running and to not cause any further issues or delays.
- 3) Commission Member Gascon asked about the software's ability to take online reservations of pavilion rentals etc. Mr. Dunkle and Ms. Euell-Taylor stated that they would have to further explore the ability as the city currently requires proof of residence (occupancy permits) for resident rates etc.

#### **Agenda Item G: Council Report**

- 1) No Report.

#### **Agenda Item H: Commission Members Park Inspection Report**

- 1) Fogerty Park (Su Schmalz) – Splash pad is not currently working.
- 2) Kaufman Park (Su Schmalz) – Asked about the timing of the pickleball lines. Mr. Dunkle stated that staff had recently met with the contractor and is waiting on the schedule.
- 3) Ruth Park Golf Course (Su Schmalz) – Stated that the Jim Woods bench leg was broken and was wondering when it would be repaired.
- 4) Heman Park (Su Schmalz) – Reported that there was a lot of smoking and glass bottles at the concerts.
- 5) Millar Park (Lisa Hummel) – Reported that an irrigation line had broke and that there had been flooding on the east end of the park. Also reported that the drinking fountain by the fields did not work.
- 6) Ruth Park Woods (Lisa Hummel) – Reported looks good; with the exception of the portion of the vehicle that still remains.
- 7) Dog Park (Patrick Fox) – Reported that the fencing had been replaced and asked about the water faucet access. Mr. Strubhart stated that staff would be moving the timer.
- 8) Lewis Park (Amy Gascon) – Reported that the center fountain in the pond was not working. Mr. Dunkle stated that the city was still waiting on a part.

#### **Agenda Item I: Unfinished Business**

- 1) UCity 100th Birthday – Commission President Wilke reported that the Park rededication ceremony to name Kingsland Park to Shelley Welsch Park took place on Saturday, May 20, 2023 at 11:00 am; the Manikins in the LOOP had been taken down; and that there was going to be a Scavenger Hunt for kids 5-12 in the city parks.

## 2) Flood Recovery and Restoration

Mr. Dunkle referred to the Agenda Item Cover contained within the packet.

Discussion took place by the Commission regarding the restoration or moving of the baseball field and what were the options, costs, scope of work, and the advantages of already having site amenities such as restrooms, parking lots, street parking, playground, and pavilions. Further discussion followed in regard to other possible locations within Heman Park and working with the UCity School District, and if a field would be available to the School District next season. Mr. Dunkle stated that the softball field at Heman Park would be ready for the fall, and that a practice field could be made available for baseball in the spring, however, a game field would not be available.

Further discussion revolved around flood insurance vs regular insurance and could the commission do anything to assist with FEMA. Mr. Dunkle stated that there wasn't anything that the Commission could do, however, the City is continuing to have ongoing discussions with FEMA on a weekly basis.

## **Agenda Item J: New Business**

- 1) Municipal Parks Planning Grant – Mr. Dunkle referred to the Agenda Item Cover contained within the packet.

Discussion of the Commission took place regarding if Metcalfe Park was the ideal place for pickleball; would the Parkview Gardens Association pay or donate the 20% match for the grant; what would be the scope of work; what would a Concept Plan costs; and do we have money on the table?

It was further stated that the Commission could use the Planning Grant for a Parks Comprehensive Plan rather than for individual parks

Commission Member Fox motioned, and Commission Member Hummel seconded to table the discussion until the July meeting. The motion was approved.

- 2) Municipal Parks Construction Grant Round 24 – Mr. Dunkle referred to the Agenda Item Cover contained within the packet.

Discussion of the Commission took place regarding various projects such as the basketball flooring in Centennial Commons, Band Shell at Heman Park, other Heman Park priorities, as well as the development or redevelopment of the existing ballfield at Millar Park into a full-size baseball field.

Commission Member Hummel motioned, and Commission Member Fox seconded to support an application for the development or redevelopment of the existing ballfield at Millar Park into a full-size baseball field. The motion was approved.

- 3) Youth Sports and Recreation Programs – Commission Member Schmalz asked if any other program than the Scavenger Hunt was being offered at this time. Mr. Dunkle stated that staff was concentrating on reconstruction, RecTrac upgrade implementation, and getting the pool up and running.

Comments were made as to the possibility of a youth basketball league for this fall/winter.

## **Agenda Item K: Commission Comments**

Commission Member Fox – Spoke about the Budget Presentation Study Session that was held and stated that the City Code/Charter states that the Parks Commission should make recommendations for the budget and stated that he would like to receive further clarification on the ordinance and what the role of the Parks Commission should be. It was asked if Council Liaison McMahan or the City Manager could provide further clarification.



**Agenda Item L: Adjournment**

Commission Member Fox motioned, and Commission Member Hummel seconded at 9:08 pm to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved.

DRAFT

PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL FOR  
IMPROVEMENTS TO HEMAN PARK  
FOR A PERFORMANCE VENUE

Merrick Felder, Architect

June 14, 2023

# Merrick Felder

a r c h i t e c t

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## PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO HEMAN PARK FOR A PERFORMANCE VENUE

Apr. 19, 2023

### **PREMISE:**

University City needs and deserves a permanent amphitheater.

I am an avocational percussionist and have enjoyed playing with the University City Summer Band for more than 20 years. For quite some time I've been thinking about how the present Heman Park concert venue might be improved, although even now it is a reasonably good place to sit and enjoy a concert. Following are some of my ideas; I have listed them in terms of possible phases based on cost and priority.

**Primary concern:** During band concerts, more than half the sound is lost at the present venue on grass: not only in volume, but also in the resonance and tonal depth of the sound. That means that half the efforts of many fine musicians is wasted; and that the audience misses out on half the beauty and power of the music. Performance quality is also affected because the grass makes it difficult for musicians to hear each other; see Liabilities below.

## **Option A: Present venue in southern picnic area of Heman Park**

### ASSETS:

This is a lovely and comfortable venue, with plenty of shade and nearby picnicking and rest rooms, and surrounded by park activities. Electrical power is also in place.

### LIABILITIES:

- Ultimately there is a limit to crowd size, although this has not been a problem for the group in which I participate.
- Parking is extremely limited and patrons, many elderly, nearly always have to walk a long distance.
- Ambient noise: Sports activities and honking of cars, though these are minor nuisances and rarely a problem.
- Acoustics for performance are a problem. The band is obligated to sit on grass, which limits how well the musicians can hear each other, and also how the sound is transmitted to the audience. In addition, there is no rear wall to reflect sound to the audience, although when it is present the portable trailer-mounted stage is marginally helpful.
- The difficulty of moving large instruments across a grassy lawn is an additional burden for members, especially the percussion section.

### PHASE 1:

Pave an area large enough for the band, perhaps 2500-3000 sq. ft., using sustainable materials such as porous pavers, which do not interfere with rainwater runoff. The area would be usable for picnicking or parking on non-concert dates. In addition, there may be grants available for installing sustainable paving, and it could be partially installed by community groups such as U. City in Bloom.

**If need be, this could be the permanent solution, accomplished at a modest cost.**

### PHASE 2:

Provide stone or precast walls, perhaps 6 ft. tall, behind the performance area to reflect sound. These could be combined with possible barbecue grills or seating for picnickers.

### PHASE 3:

Build a permanent band shell, which would be usable by all types of musical groups or speakers. The drawing attached shows just one of many possible designs, with outside dimensions of about 45 x 65 ft. It should be:

- a structure acoustically designed to help broadcast sound to the audience; this also benefits the performers.
- no larger than necessary
- harmonize with the park environment
- be usable as a picnicking pavilion, and
- be built of durable, low-maintenance materials.

## **Option B: Potential future amphitheater in northwest corner of Heman Park**

**ASSETS:** A beautiful area near the fountain, with mature trees for shade, high visibility, convenient access and plenty of parking. An amphitheater with a seating area for 200-300 or more could be built in this area, potentially without the loss of any old-growth trees.

### **LIABILITIES:**

- The location may be considered by some an intrusion on the beauty of the park's main entry area, although concerts have been held there in the past.
- Rest rooms: At first, rest rooms could be made available inside the Pool or Community Center. Ultimately new rest rooms should be built.
- Ambient noise: Vehicular traffic noise, primarily from Olive Blvd., could be problematic at times. The drawing attached indicates a system of walls, which should be located to work with existing tree locations. Earthen berms would be equally effective and less unsightly. Walls behind the performance area would add to the acoustics of the performance pavilion.
- Flora: The project would be designed in cooperation with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry. In case it is deemed necessary, removal or relocation of any trees would be done only with its prior approval.
- Utilities: Electric power and sewers are not presently available.
- Drainage: The proposed concert area is flat and retains water following rainfall. A civil engineer should be consulted and French drains or other mediation considered.

### **PHASE 1:**

Provide a paved surface of perhaps 2500-3000 sq. ft. for performance, with an access drive from Princeton Ave., and electrical power for microphones and electronic instruments. The pavement should be sustainable as in Option A, and usable for picnicking. Build walls for noise abatement, and address drainage. Add picnic tables and possible barbecue grills.

**PHASE 2:** Build a band shell. This would need to include a room for amplification equipment and storage.

**PHASE 3:** Erect a public rest room.



## **Conclusion:**

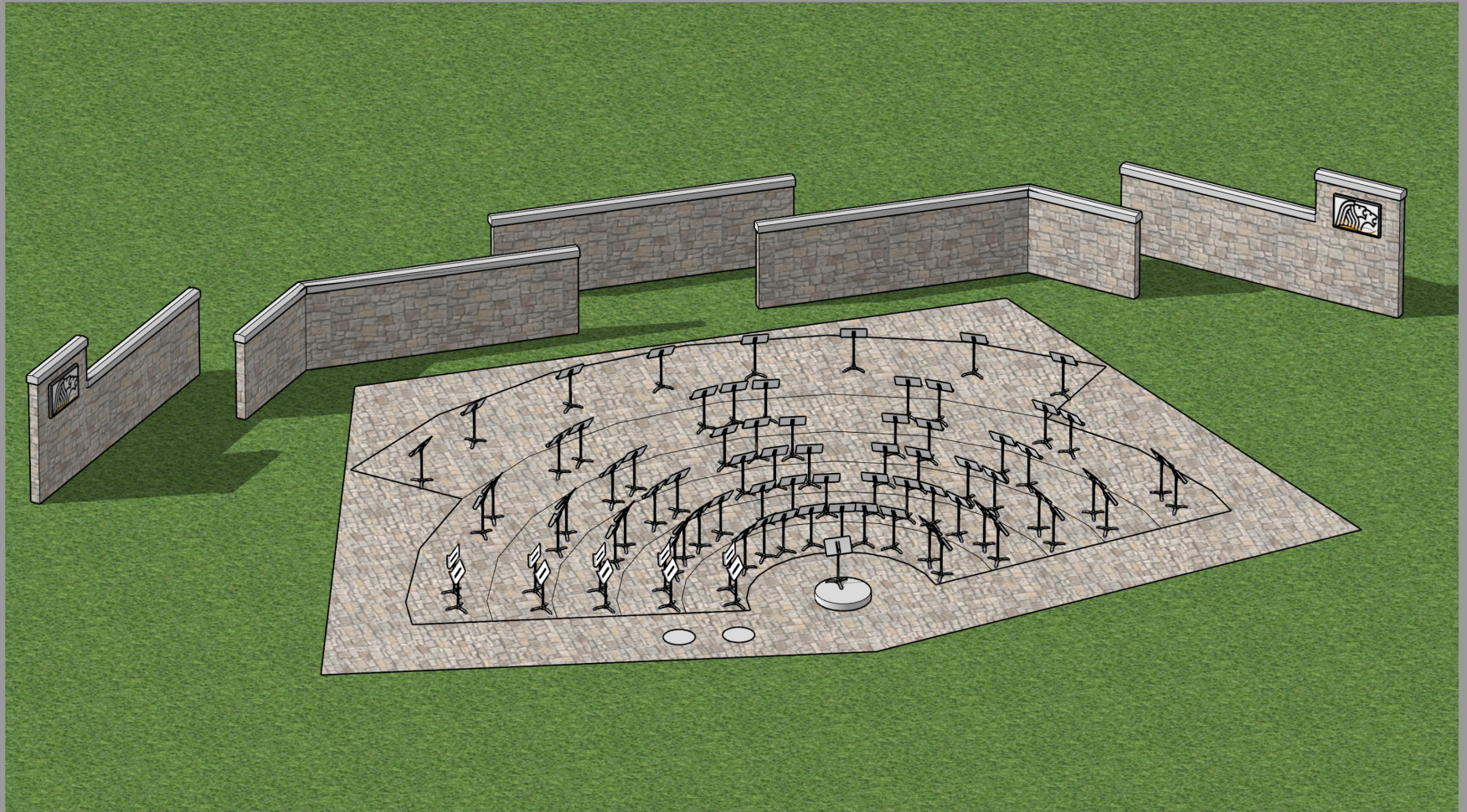
Heman Park is a pleasant place to play and hear a concert as it exists today. Even minimal improvements can add greatly to the experience. Ultimately, however, a community so historically rich with musicians, musical appreciation and performance venues should have its own amphitheater.

**Note re: lighting for nighttime concerts:** An additional perk a shell offers is stage lighting. University City has an advantage in that its parks are open until 10:30 pm, unlike nearly all other parks in the county which close at dusk. The park is safe and well-lit at night for patrons; but presently the length of concerts is severely limited by the performers' inability to read their music after sundown.

**Note for comparison:** The Manchester Community Band plays summer concerts at Schroeder Park. The park's concert venue includes a performance pavilion with convenient rest rooms and plenty of parking. The City of Manchester Dept. of Parks, Recreation and Arts sponsors the band; and it enjoys support from the Parkway School System and the Dept. of Public Works, which furnish and transport chairs, music stands and large percussion instruments. Though the U. City Summer Band and other performance groups enjoy some support from the City's Parks Dept., University City certainly merits the type of cooperation apparent in places like Manchester.

Respectfully submitted by Merrick Felder

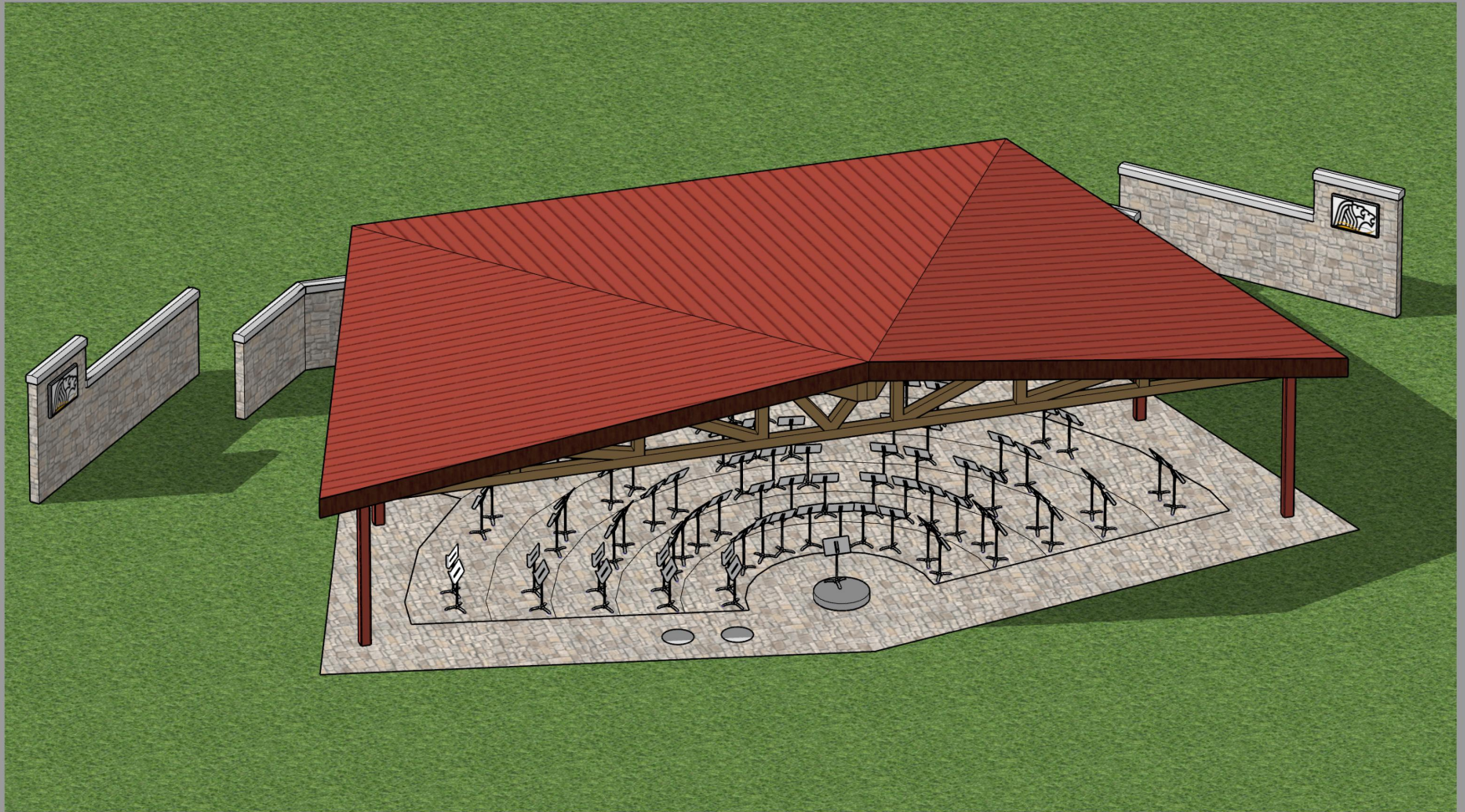




Conceptual Plan for 80-Piece Concert Band  
Permeable pavers approx. 2200 sq. ft. | Sound-reflective walls

Merrick Felder  
a r c h i t e c t





## Conceptual Band Shell for 80-Piece Concert Band

Standing seam metal roof | Timber framing | Steel columns

Merrick Felder  
architect





South Site - Birdseye View





## South Site

Permeable pavers | Sound-reflecting walls

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a r c h i t e c t





South Site  
Completed band shell

Merrick Felder  
architect





North Site - Birdseye View





North Site





Schroeder Park, Manchester, MO – Birdseye view





## Manchester Community Band at Schroeder Park

Storage, electrical and rest rooms behind shell

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