

Outdoor theater coming to Lapham Peak Park

by Caley Meals in the Freeman Weekend edition in the Spring of 2007

“Why build it now just to have it sit outside all winter,” he said.

Faracy estimates the cost to construct the theater – to be named Summer Stage of Delafield – and put on the first show will total between \$18,000 to \$19,000. He hopes to hold the first performance, which will be a fundraiser, in June.

“It will be available for everybody to use,” said board member Diane Powell. “I think it’s a wonderful idea.” Powell, who teaches social studies and theatre at Kettle Moraine High School, joined the theater board after attending a May fundraiser for Summer Stage at Jessica’s Cafe. The fundraiser raised around \$5,000 for the project, Faracy said.

Faracy, who was on the city’s common council from June of 2005 to April of this year and is still a member of the city’s finance advisory board, first began planning for an outdoor theater almost four years ago. But personal issues, including family illness and his appointment to the council, caused him to put the idea aside for some time.

A variety of locations were suggested over the years, but Summer Stage’s ultimate location in Lapham Peak is ideal, Faracy said.

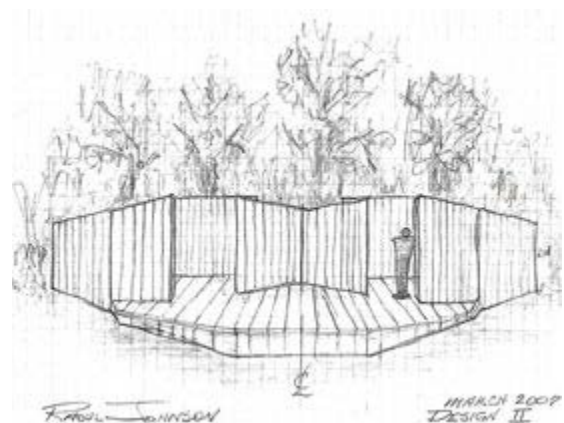
“Summer Stage will be less of a structure than simply a space created in a natural setting, for the performing arts,” Faracy said. “We are an addition to but also a part of the park. That is our challenge.” The wooden theater will be tucked into trees next to a pond near the park’s Evergreen Grove, embracing the natural surroundings, Faracy said. Light from the nearby Prairie Path and Ice Age Trail will provide safe walk-paths to the theater’s location.

“As soon as I saw the spot, I thought, ‘This is it!’” Faracy said.

Rendering of Original Stage

Trees behind the stage’s location will provide coverage for a backstage area made of tents. A gently sloping hill surrounding the spot will offer views from a multitude of locations. The area can easily hold 400 to 500 people and seating will be “festival style,” meaning the audience can bring blankets and folding chairs to sit on, he said.

The Summer Stage board will produce at least one professional quality show a season, Faracy said. Otherwise, the theater will be available to the community for rental, he said. “It will not be a community theater so much as a theater space for the



community,” he said. “The idea was to create a low-cost space for whomever wants to use it.”

As part of the theater group’s deal with the park, Lapham Peak will receive five percent of all ticket sales, he said. Faracy, who graduated from Loyola University with a major in English and minor in drama, is a part-time television commercial and stage actor. He also works full-time as a financial consultant for “Wells Fargo Investments.” If appropriate, I would like to act in some of the performances,” he said.

Faracy said he is not worried about developer Bob Lang’s plans to potentially include an outdoor theater in his proposed “lifestyle center” development at Highway C and Interstate 94, which would back up to the northwest edge of Lapham Peak.

“The more the merrier,” Faracy said.