

Development of US Rowing National Team Training Center Facilities in Downtown Cincinnati 1985-1995

January 1985 – December 8, 1988: With the assistance of the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, US Rowing (the national governing body of the Olympic sport of rowing), and cognizant governmental bodies (which unanimously endorsed the concept) a \$4.5 million Boathouse and restaurant was constructed at Sawyer Point to be used as a training center for US Rowing. [...] Among the governmental approvals received by the Developer, Mr. Charles J. Kubicki, was a letter of permission issued December 21, 1987, by the US Army Corps of Engineers, for the construction of a 120' dock on the Ohio River as part of the Sawyer Point facility.

1989: In March of 1989, the Developer proposed an expanded 300' dock for this facility. This resulted in a request from the United States Coast Guard that the expanded dock go through the Corps of Engineers public notice process. [...] Lt. Commander Clay A. Fust from Cincinnati, Michael Rollman from Louisville, and James Law from Cincinnati all represented the U.S. Coast Guard at a conference at the Sawyer Point Rowing Center, August 7, 1989, together with 24 other representatives of the various agencies and interests involved. [...] At that conference, a suggestion was made that the major rowing activity should take place on the other side of the Ohio River and the Licking River rather than on the Ohio side of the Ohio River where the main commercial channel is heavily travelled. This suggestion was adopted by the Rowing Center officials after review. Based upon that resolution, the developer withdrew the permit application for the 300' dock on September 27, 1989. In November 1989, US Rowing representatives including the National Technical Director and Olympic Coach reviewed the Licking River for suitability. A conference was held December 14, 1989 involving members of the Propeller Club to identify sites for a facility to use the Licking River. [...]

1990: The result of the December 14, 1989 meeting was an offer by the Bernstein interests of a site immediately upstream from Crockett's and immediately adjacent to the mouth of the Licking River for a temporary barge facility. [...] Neither the Coast Guard nor the Propeller Club members (other than those individual boat owners mooring adjacent to Crockett's) opposed the permit application. These events and the permit process delayed facility completion for the entire 1989 and 1990 competitive seasons, although crews launching from the Rowing Center continued to use the Ohio and Licking Rivers without a launch dock and without incident.

1991: With the Corps of Engineers permit having issued in September of 1990, the 1991 competitive season resulted in a national championship junior team and seven national championship senior teams, all training on the Licking River. [...]

1990-1992: At the same time, the Rowing Center requested a permit to complete the partially constructed stairs on the Ohio side, left by the developer, to permit limited but safer access to the Ohio River. [...]

1992: After the success of the 1991 operations on the Licking River, the demolition of the Central Bridge required relocation of the barge facility above Crockett's in the spring of 1992. The City of

Newport applied for a permit to relocate the facility to the area of the Fourth Street Bridge on the Licking River. On July 17, 1992, the U.S. Coast Guard demonstrated at the physical location of the barge, initially proposed, would project into the channel. They felt that this posed a possible impediment to navigation. The Center agreed to extensive dredging in the area and removal of sufficient shoreline to locate the barge and docks behind the Fourth Street Bridge pier to meet this objection. [...] No objection was filed by the U.S. Coast Guard.

1993: After the spring high water, excavation began in the permitted area below the Fourth Street Bridge so that the barge could be installed at that location without protruding beyond the bridge pier. When the Rowing Center representatives authorized installation of the barge in May of 1993 the dredged depth was insufficient to allow the barge to float upright. Arrangements were being made to complete dredging with the barge in place. Unfortunately, approximately a month after the barge was installed, it partially sank in a storm. [...]

1994: The original discussions with the City of Newport, beginning in 1989, had contemplated construction of a permanent boathouse on City land to replace or supplement the barge. In the summer and fall of 1994, a widely publicized Boathouse building project was reviewed and approved by the City of Newport involving the construction of a 4,800 square foot building above the mean high water mark with a dock to be located well within the previously permitted location in the dredged area below the Fourth Street Bridge. This proposal was reviewed in a public hearing in August of 1994 attended by the Coast Guard. [...]

1995: In January of 1995, the Rowing Center sought Corps permission to construct a 10' wide floating dock at the location previously permitted. Members of the towing industry who had objected in 1992, objected in 1995. An additional objection was received from the Coast Guard. On the day the objection was received by the applicant, a meeting was scheduled with the Coast Guard on site. The Coast Guard representative acknowledged the day after the site visit that there was no objection to the dock construction from a navigational standpoint and that it added to the safety of the participants over the existing shore side launching arrangements. The following day, April 21, the applicant confirmed and accepted the offer to facilitate cooperative training with the towing industry, the Coast Guard auxiliary, etc. [...]. That same week, the Rowing Center Board member most cognizant of marine safety matters, Robert Miller, Commander U.S.N.R., volunteered to work with the local U.S.C.G. command on communication, training, and related issues. Mr. Miller has contacted the Cincinnati U.S.C.G. command and will participate in all further meetings.