

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)

# Future is promising for new boathouse

**By: Greg Meyer**

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The Spartan crew club is on the verge of having a new home.

As first reported back in January, the team's existence had come under fire after casino planners proposed a building site, which included the home to the only boathouse in Northeast Ohio. The boathouse, owned and operated by the Cleveland Rowing Foundation (CRF), may still not survive, but the plans for the new Rivergate Park are sailing right along.

In January, the members of CRF, including CWRU, John Carroll University, Cleveland State University, several area high schools and many individual rowing enthusiasts, had only raised \$500,000 towards the \$3.2 million cost of purchasing the new site of the park. The Trust for Public Land, which purchased the land and is holding it until CRF can purchase it, gave the foundation an initial deadline of March 31, 2010 to raise the money. However, since that time, the purchase option expiration date has been pushed back to July 31 and the foundation has raised an additional \$1.4 million.

CRF isn't alone in their push for the park, either. According to published reports, mayor Frank Jackson recently proposed a low-interest \$300,000 loan to help fund the park. The city also wrote to Democratic representatives Dennis Kucinich and Maria Fudge to lobby for federal funding. As of Tuesday, at least Kucinich earmarked the project in the upcoming spending bills, while Fudge's proposals were kept private. In addition, the foundation recently received a \$100,000 dollar donation from the MetLife Foundation, channeled through the Trust for Public Land. While the CRF wants to raise all of the money, they will borrow whatever necessary to close the deal by the deadline. "I think our move is imminent," Theresa Gang, the CRF's director, told The Plain Dealer.

What this means for the Spartans crew team is that they will be able to continue their 18-year legacy at Case. While they were unable to donate any substantial sums of money, the team did pull their weight, allowing the CRF to take over the annual Hammer Regatta and use it as a fundraiser. The CWRU team members helped set up and volunteered to run the event.

Volunteering was not the only work they did that day, however. The team also brought back seven gold medals back out of the nine events they competed in. They won the Hammer Cup, a trophy that has been passed between Case and John Carroll for the last 16 years. Furthermore, the women's team won the points competition between all collegiate teams at the event.

"We did very well," said Margaret Wilkes, club president. "We had all kinds of people set personal records to go along with the medals." It was a great way to build momentum going into the spring sprint season, which begins this weekend.

The team will compete against other University Athletic Association teams in the University Rowing Association Championships in Butler, Pa.

"We have a very young team," said Wilkes. "For a majority of the team, it will be their first sprint season."

Wilkes said the main goal is just to get time on the water, have fun, and get experience for their later races, including the Home Schools Regatta, Alumni Regatta, and the West Virginia Governor's Cup. While the team might be in the midst of a rebuilding season, they can remain confident that their new boathouse will also be soon under construction.

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