

CRMC DECISION WORKSHEET

2025-01-022

The Dunes Club

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Hearing Date: | |
| Approved as Recommended | |
| Approved w/additional Stipulations | |
| Approved but Modified | |
| Denied | Vote |

| APPLICATION INFORMATION | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|--|---|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| File Number | Town | Project Location | | Category | Special Exception | Variance |
| 2025-01-022 | Narragansett | 137 Boston Neck Road | | M | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Plat | A | | | |
| | | Owner Name and Address | | | | |
| Date Accepted | 9/3/2025 | The Dunes Club | | Work at or Below MHW | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Date Completed | 12/1/2025 | 137 Boston Neck Road Narragansett, RI 02882 | | Lease Required | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

proposed maintenance consisting of installing a new Fiberglass Reinforced Sheetpile (FRP) within 12” of the existing concrete footing. The FRP will be anchored back by drilling through the existing wall above the footing and installing anchors prior to installation of the FRP. The tie-rod and top of the FRP will be encased in reinforced concrete cap. The work is being proposed to eliminate erosion below the wall/footing. An alternative route for public access is proposed while the work is being performed.

KEY PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES

- Coastal Feature:** Moderately Developed Barrier Beach consisting of a Coastal Beach backed by Vertical Concrete Seawall
- Water Type:** Type 1, Conservation Area, Rhode Island Sound
- Red Book:** 1.1.4.A, 1.1.9, 1.1.10, 1.2.1.B, 1.2.2.A, 1.2.2.B, 1.2.2.G, 1.2.3., 1.3.1.G, 1.3.1.N
- SAMP:** Shoreline Change (Beach) Special Area Management Plan (SAMP)

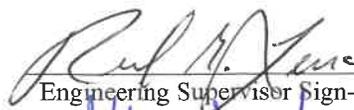
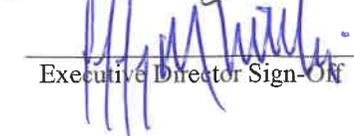
Variances and/or Special Exception Details: None

Additional Comments and/or Council Requirements:

Specific Staff Stipulations (beyond Standard stipulations): See Staff Report

STAFF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Engineer RML Recommendation: No Objection
 Biologist _____ Recommendation: _____
 Other Staff _____ Recommendation: _____

 12/2/25
 Engineering Supervisor Sign-Off _____ date
 12/2/25
 Executive Director Sign-Off _____ date

 Supervising Biologist Sign-off _____ date

 Staff Sign off on Hearing Packet (Eng/Bio) _____ date

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
ENGINEERING REVIEW**

TO: Jeffrey M. Willis, Executive Director
DEPT: Coastal Resources Management Council
FROM: Richard M. Lucia, P.E.
DEPT: CRMC Engineering Section

Date: 12/1/2025

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| CRMC File No: | M2025-01-022 |
| Owner: | The Dunes Club |
| Site Address: | 137 Boston Neck Road; Plat A, Lot 33 |
| Site Town: | Narragansett |

Project: Proposed maintenance consisting of installing a new Fiberglass Reinforced Sheetpile (FRP) within 12” of the existing concrete footing. The FRP will be anchored back by drilling through the existing wall above the footing and installing anchors prior to installation of the FRP. The tie-rod and top of the FRP will be encased in reinforced concrete cap. The work is being proposed to eliminate erosion below the wall/footing. An alternative route for public access is proposed while the work is being performed.

Water Type/Name: Type 1, Conservation Area, Rhode Island Sound

Coastal Feature: Moderately Developed Barrier Beach consisting of a Coastal Beach backed by Vertical Concrete Seawall

Plans Reviewed: “The Dunes Club Seawall Protection, Narragansett, Rhode Island...” Sheets 1-6, Dated August 2025, Pare Corporation, stamped by Todd Turcotte, P.E. and “The Dunes Club...Temporary Access Plan...,” sheet 1 of 1, dated 3/19/2025, by Race Coastal Engineering.

Previous Relevant CRMC Assents: CRMC 1992-01-050: Improvement/Replacement of 340 linear feet +/- of deteriorated steel sheetpile bulkhead by construction of new vertical concrete wall and footing directly seaward of existing bulkhead.

Staff Comments/Recommendation: The site is fronted by a coastal sandy beach located on the property of the Dunes Club in Narragansett. The public utilizes this stretch of shoreline between Narragansett Beach to the Narrow River inlet/outlet. The existing seawall currently exists as a 350-foot unexposed long sheetpile wall (installed in 1939) which is fronted by a vertical concrete seawall.

Neighboring properties Healy (CRMC File 2025-01-038) and Barry (CRMC File 2025-01-58) are also seeking similar approvals and would be constructed and completed alongside this project.

Please note all three proposals are considered Maintenance applications, and normally these would have been processed administratively, however since this beach is heavily utilized by the public, and comments and concerns were submitted during the public notice period, it was decided that all three projects be reviewed and decided by the full coastal council.

As noted in a letter submitted to CRMC from the applicant’s attorney, Sean Coffey, “*The Clubhouse dates to 1939, constructed following the destruction of the 1928-29 clubhouse in the Hurricane of 1938. The existing Clubhouse, including the original seawall also built in 1939, are*

listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is subject to Historic District Commission oversight and approval of alterations to existing features, as occurred for the prior CRMC approved modifications to the seawall undertaken in 1992.” Please note that RIHPHC has submitted a letter stating that the project will have no adverse effect upon historic properties.

Please note that the original application submitted to CRMC was for a more robust structure that would have had significant impact on the existing shoreline access. This initial work consisted of king piles (W14x233) encased in approximately two-foot diameter casings driven and grouted to bedrock and extending to the top of the wall. Additionally, sheetpiles (NZ26) were going to be installed between the king piles. This scope of work was revised due to CRMC staff concerns related to potential impacts to public access and its negative inconsistencies to the policies of the RICRMP.

The project as now proposed is to stabilize the existing vertical seawall in the event of erosion which could cause undermining of the existing footing and structural failure of the wall. Erosion has been documented through erosion rate studies as a severe problem at this location (reference CRMC predicted erosion rate maps (see attached, Figure 1)), as well as staff observations. The new driven sheetpile will prevent soil loss underneath the existing footing and the tierods will provide further resistance from failure. It is staff engineer’s opinion that the project will help support the structure from potential failure.

To address public access throughout the construction, a temporary path will be open to the public during construction from 7am- 3pm. This is shown on the submitted plans. As stated in a letter addressed to CRMC from Sean Coffey, Esq. dated August 20, 2025:

“The proposed project minimizes negative impacts to public access to the maximum extent possible. Impacts to public access are temporary during construction. A temporary access path will be provided as depicted within the attached drawing to provide the public access along the beach during the construction.” CRMC staff has no objection to the proposed temporary access during construction as this will allow safe and adequate access along the shoreline.

Of particular concern is the existing level of lateral public access along the shoreline between Narrow river inlet/outlet and Narragansett beach throughout the year. As noted, this stretch of shoreline is heavily used throughout the year by the public. Episodically, erosion takes place in front of the existing wall exposing the footings and the tide reaches the face of the wall, making lateral access very difficult or impossible to maneuver. This design to stop scouring involves the installation of new sheetpile that extends to a depth beyond the predicted scour of 3’ to 3’-5” will most likely exacerbate erosion seaward of the wall. The resulting erosion will further reduce public access along the shore over time. Please note, the scour protection wall will be installed one foot seaward of the existing footing and staff has requested the designer Todd Turcotte, P.E. (email 10/22/2025 and 10/31/2025) to justify not cutting back the footing such as is proposed for Barry’s application (CRMC 2025-01-058). The designer has stated that the footing size cannot be reduced because of the dimensions of the existing wall, the anticipated scour and that reducing the footing would jeopardize its structural stability (Reference letter dated November 18, 2025). *“The structural integrity of the concrete wall is dependent on that footing toe of the retaining wall. If we remove that the structural integrity of the entire wall will be in jeopardy and with the limited depth of the toe protection for the wall, there is not enough area to design an alternative repair. As you pointed out it is well documented that the footing is frequently exposed and in jeopardy of being further undermined, but to date it has been stable because the soil under the footing has not been compromised. Changing the design of the existing footing is not prudent or recommended, as this wall is different than the Barry wall.”*

Based on the response of Todd Turcotte, P.E. and structural review of the existing wall, there are no engineering objections to leaving the footing as is and the subsequent design. CRMC staff has recommended a stipulation to reduce the cross-sectional slope of the footing from 5% to 2%. The rationale behind this stipulation is that the public will sometimes use the existing footing as an informal walkway when it is exposed, and a typical cross section of sidewalk is a maximum of 2% grade. Please note the public now uses this crossing at their own risk. In discussions with the applicant's consultant, there were no objections to the additional stipulation.

The applicant has addressed concerns regarding temporary and future public access and the requirements of the RICRMP in the following section.

APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO PUBLIC ACCESS:

CRMC has asked the Applicant to address public access requirements as listed in the RICRMP Per 650-RICR-20-00-1.3.6(B)(1), "Any public access impacts associated with a proposed project should be avoided and minimized to the maximum extent possible."

And, per 650-RICR-20-00-1.3.6(B)(4), "All structural shoreline protection facilities should be designed and constructed in a manner which does not unreasonably interfere with the public's right to pass and re-pass along the shore."

The applicant's response is that there will be only a temporary change in lateral public access, and the repairs are below grade. Also, access from the Narragansett town beach is limited and bottle necked from 131 Boston Neck Road (Barry Property and CRMC application 2025-01-058) which has the bowed sheetwall that is approximately 6 feet seaward of the Dunes Club wall (or approximately 2 feet from the Dunes Club footing toe). Furthermore, the applicant states "*Access will be maintained and continue during non-highwater events as currently exists. The Dunes Club urges prompt consideration and believe our submission is well defined, developed and timely. Recent storms did damage to this area and exposed weakness in the current structure thus we believe a sense of urgency exists. There would be a significant adverse impact to the public access should repairs not be completed.*"

CRMC staff agrees with the Save the Bay assessment (see Save the Bay letter dated 11/14/2025) that the level of public access will most likely be reduced at times of heavy erosion, since the new scour protection will likely exacerbate erosion in front of the wall and create less beach area as currently exists. **This is the typical result of any hardened vertical structure. However, the staff engineer agrees that the alternative of not protecting the wall from failure would be dangerous not only for public safety but would increase the likelihood that debris would end up in tidal waters. Also, it is staff's understanding that the Town is currently working on possibly dredging the mouth of the Narrow River to the North and using these dredge spoils for beach nourishment. It is staff's opinion that a beach nourishment program could be implemented which would lessen the impacts to access in front of these structures. Additionally, it is staff's opinion that the application meets the standards maintenance requirements of the RICRMP.**

Other pertinent policies are the following:

- 1) *Per 650-RICR-20-00-1.3.1(G)(5)(n), "Applicants shall provide appropriate on-site lateral shoreline access of a similar type and level to that which will be impacted by the proposed project. Applicants shall submit a plan detailing the lateral public access over or around the landward side of the proposed structure."*

- 2) *Per 650-RICR-20-00-1.2.1(B)(2)(g), "Activities and alterations subject to Council jurisdiction contiguous to public parks, public beaches, public Rights of way to the shore, and conservation areas abutting Type 1 waters shall not significantly interfere with public use and enjoyment of such facilities. Where significant interference is found, the Council shall suitably modify or prohibit that alteration or activity."*
- 3) *Per 650-RICR-20-00-1.3.6(A)(1): "As trustee of Rhode Island's coastal resources and in accordance with state and federal statutory mandates, the Council has a responsibility to ensure that public access to the shore is protected, maintained and, where possible, enhanced for the benefit of all."*

Comments and concerns from the public submitted on November 14, 2025, prior to the end of the Public Notice period:

- 1) **Save the Bay:** The concerns are mostly due to the likely potential of a reduction in lateral public access from the increase of sand loss. Save the Bay is requesting that the applicants provide permanent lateral access along this shoreline.
- 2) **Town of Narragansett Conservation Commission/ Tree Board:** The concerns for all three projects were:
 - General lack of detail in the application and specific lack of detail to project time line
 - Environmental and ecological impacts not considered,
 - Lack details of construction equipment ingress/egress,
 - Increase erosion rates fronting the seawall and creation of a hazardous walking environment
 - Impact to existing dunes to temporary footpath
 - Question concerning the long-term effectiveness of the FRP.
- 3) **Surfriders Foundation RI Chapter:** Recommended an alternatives assessment which includes nature-based solution, dune restoration wherever feasible and post-construction monitoring and Maintenance.
- 4) **Narrow River Preservation Association:** "NRPA recommends ...working with all stakeholders to promote longer-term solutions to address coastal resiliency along the beach and mouth of the Narrow River."

Applicant's Response:

In a letter dated November 18, 2025, submitted to CRMC, the Project Manager Dani Goulet, P.E. responded that they agree there is erosion occurring at the site, thus the need for scour protection, and that a long-term sand management program is the best way to ensure public access to the entire beach. As noted, staff are aware of the potential for development of a long-term beach nourishment program for the beach. Other concerns were addressed, and the staff engineer concurs with the responses presented by Mr. Goulet in the letter dated November 18, 2025, letter.

Recommendations and Conclusions:

It is staff opinion that the work proposed is necessary to protect the existing historical wall from failure due scour. Also, the proposed temporary access proposed appears to be adequate during construction. In order to protect the public from failure of these walls, there are no objections to the proposed scour protection.

Recommended Additional Stipulations:

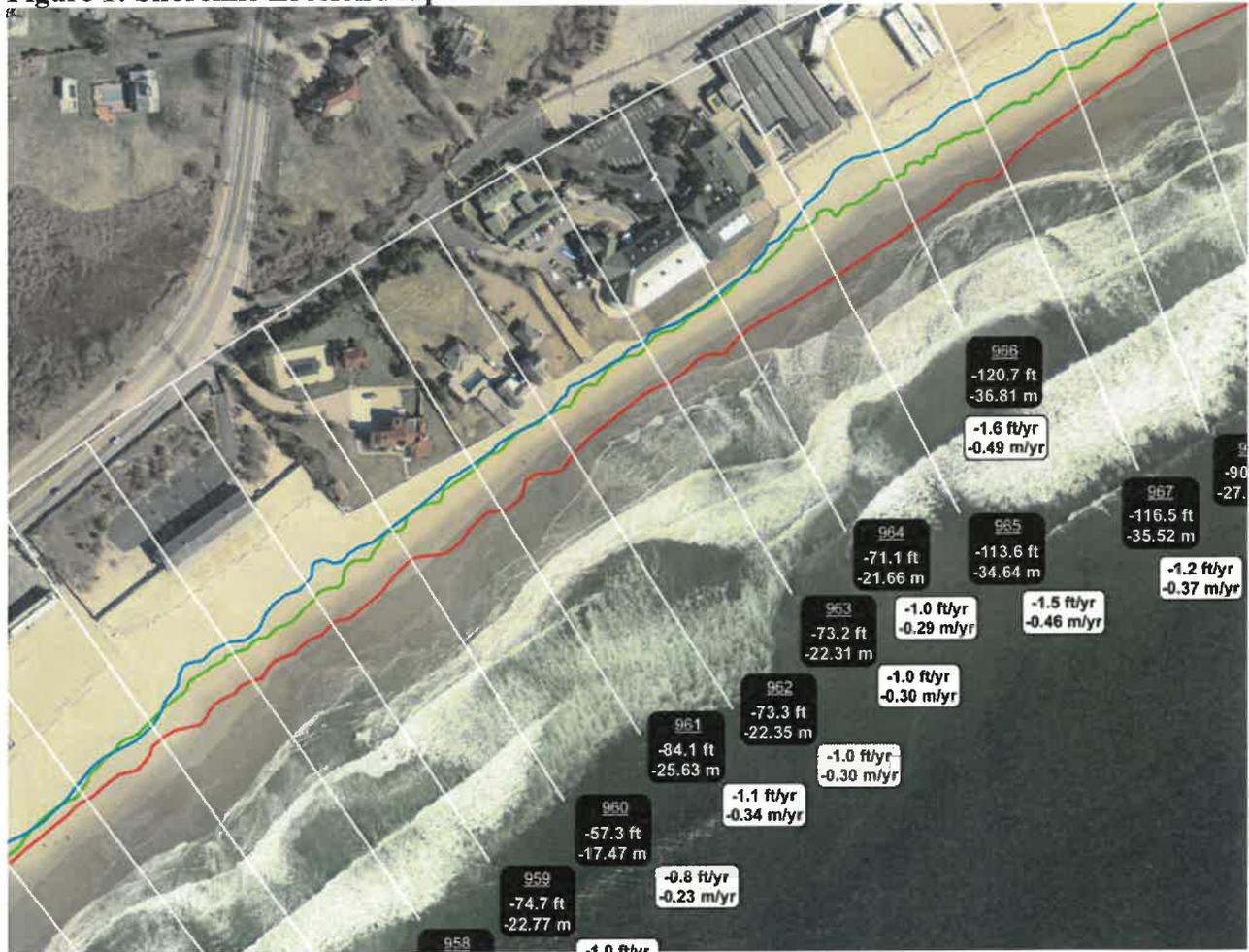
(E1) No further future seaward expansion is allowed under this Assent. The one-foot seaward expansion is a onetime allowance.

(E2) The new footing/cap cross section slope shall be a maximum of 2% .

(E3) All work shall be completed by May 15, 2026, or if not completed by this date, the lateral access shall be restored to previous levels prior to construction, and all construction activities shall cease. No work shall occur between May 15 and October 1.

(E4) In the area of dune section where there will be temporary lateral access, after construction the dune shall be restored to its original condition. Temporary public access, as shown on the approved plans, shall be open to the public from 7am-3pm daily until the completion of the project.

Figure 1: Shoreline Erosion Map



Blue Line is position of shoreline in 2003/2004

Red Line is position of shoreline in 1939

Signed 

Staff Engineer