

# CRMC DECISION WORKSHEET

2025-10-075

Chrones Family Rev. Trust

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
2025-10-075	Westerly	25 Atlantic Avenue		M	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Plat	175			
		<b>Owner Name and Address</b>				
Date Accepted	1/13/26	Chrones Family Rev. Trust		Work at or Below MHW	X	
Date Completed	2/27/26	c/o James Chrones [REDACTED]		Lease Required	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This office has under consideration the application to reconstruct a revetment on a undeveloped barrier beach abutting Type 1 waters by exchanging existing stone with 350-400 tons of larger armor stones, up to 7.2 foot in diameter, within the footprint of the existing revetment (detailed in Assent 1993-03-062). Based on the submitted plans and narrative, the work exceeds scope of maintenance and therefore is considered a new wall adjacent to Type 1 water (Conservation Area) on an Undeveloped Barrier Beach. New shoreline protection facilities are prohibited abutting Type 1 waters and on undeveloped barrier beaches per RICRMP Section 1.3.1.G.3.(a). Work also involves removing and replacing in-kind undermined patio sections and concrete beach access stairs.

## KEY PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES

**Coastal Feature:** Undeveloped Barrier Beach and the secondary coastal feature is the Riprap Revetment; for the purpose of establishing buffers and setbacks the controlling coastal feature shall be the inland edge of the Riprap Revetment.

**Water Type:** Type 1, Conservation Area, Block Island Sound and Little Maschaug Pond

**Red Book:** 1.3.1.(G), 1.3.1.(N), 1.1.6(G), 1.2.2.(A), 1.2.2.(B)

**SAMP:** n/a

Variations and/or Special Exception Details:

To be determined

Additional Comments and/or Council Requirements:

Specific Staff Stipulations (beyond Standard stipulations):

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Engineer RML Recommendation: Denial

Biologist \_\_\_\_\_ Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

 2/27/26  
Engineering Supervisor Sign-Off date

  
Supervising Biologist Sign-off date

 2/27/26  
Executive Director 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: 2/27/2026

SUBJ: **CRMC File No.:** M2025-10-075

**Owner:** Chrones Family Rev. Trust

**Site Address:** 25 Atlantic Avenue Plat: 175 Lot: 17

**Site Town:** Westerly

**Project:** To reconstruct a revetment on an undeveloped barrier beach abutting Type 1 waters by exchanging existing stone with 350-400 tons of larger armor stones, up to 7.2 foot in diameter, within the footprint of the existing revetment (detailed in Assent 1993-03-062).

Work also involves removing and replacing in-kind undermined patio sections and concrete beach access stairs.

**Water Type/Name:** Type 1, Conservation Area, Block Island Sound and Little Maschaug Pond

**Coastal Feature: Undeveloped Barrier Beach and the secondary coastal feature is the Riprap Revetment; for the purpose of establishing buffers and setbacks the controlling coastal feature shall be the inland edge of Riprap Revetment.**

**Plans Reviewed: "Chrones Family Revocable Trust, 25 Atlantic Avenue, Westerly, RI, Plat 175, Lot 17, Regulatory Review Shoreline Maintenance Armor Stone Restacking..." sheets 1-10, last revised 10/23/25, by VHB, stamped by August J. Kreuzkamp, III, P.E.**

**Staff Comments/Recommendation:**

The dwelling and the associated riprap revetment are located at the western terminus of Atlantic Avenue, Westerly on an undeveloped barrier beach abutting Type 1 waters (Block Island Sound and Little Maschaug Pond). Based on the submitted narrative, the dwelling was built in 1922, and the shoreline protection (Riprap Revetment) existed prior to 1954. This structure is the only residential development on this stretch of undeveloped barrier beach (entire length of beach along Maschaug and Little Maschaug Pond)

The owner of the property is the Chrones Family Rev. Trust. CRMC staff have found 14 CRMC Assent for work on this property. Relevant CRMC Assents to this project are:

- CRMC Assent# 1993-03-062 was issued for constructing a concrete retaining wall behind the existing rock revetment.
- CRMC Assent#1995-01-038 was issued to "make repairs to existing seawall damaged by December storm 1994. No new stone will be used."
- CRMC Assent#1999-10-031 was issued to "Repair revetment by replacing stones that eroded from the revetment during storm events back on the revetment at 25 Atlantic Ave."
- CRMC Assent# 2011-09-028 "Repair existing seawall no new stone, restack fallen stone, replace existing deck, no increase."

- CRMC Assent# 2012-11-182 (Sandy Storm Permit), Emergency General Permit, “Reset/replace rip-rap that was displaced by storm. Repair/replace concrete patio.
- CRMC Assent# 2022-09-073 “Maintain stone revetment, concrete patio and stairs. Exceed 1’ vertical of existing height and 1’ seaward of existing toe. No addition of stone is authorized with this permit.”
- CRMC Assent# 2024-10-047 “Restack revetment and install back-of-wall drainage layer. Removed unpermitted concrete. No expansion of the revetment is permitted.”

As noted, CRMC Assent #2024-10-047 was partly issued to resolve the unauthorized pouring of concrete on top of the existing wall.

The Executive Director has reviewed this application and has determined the project requires a Council Assent and does not qualify as a maintenance. The RICMRP 1.3.1.N.e (Maintenance of Structures, Policies) ***“Many structures under Council jurisdiction predate the Council and were not permitted by Council Assent when originally constructed. Persons proposing maintenance or repair activities on such structures shall be required to obtain a Certification of Maintenance, meet relevant standards of this program, or obtain a Council Assent, as determined by the Council’s Executive Director.”*** The applicant disagrees that the scope of work exceeds a Maintenance, thus this project is being brought to the attention of the Coastal Council for a decision on this matter.

Please note no new stone was allowed in any of the previous Assent except for CRMC Assent 2024-10-047 which allowed for “[a] maximum of 50 tons of undersized stone may be exchanged with 50 tons of new stone not to exceed 4.5 feet in diameter. All undersized stone must be disposed of offsite. This is a one-time allowance and shall not be provided in future assents.” The rationale for allowing this one-time replacement was the existence of undersized stones (approximately 2’ or less) which in a storm event may become projectiles in a major storm event. CRMC staff’s professional judgement was that it was important to maintain the functionality of the revetment and minimize projectile damage. Please note this allowance to add a limited amount of stone is in accordance with RICRMP 1.3.G.6.b (Maintenance and repair of shoreline protection) ***“Maintenance and repair of existing structural shoreline protection shall be the minimum that is required to maintain the functional viability or structural integrity. In the case of riprap revetments, the addition of limited quantities of riprap armor stone to existing damaged revetments may be allowed as a maintenance activity provided that no impact to coastal resources or lateral access results.”***

The current application is to exchange 350-400 tons (700,000-800,000 pounds) of stone. The design calls for armor stone to range in size between 2.3ft – 7.2ft in diameter (weighing between 1-13 tons) with toe stones to be 6.2ft in diameter or larger. The average stone size range which exists at the site is approximately 3’ to 5’ with some outliers which are larger than this dimension. The design engineer has stated, replacement of these stones is necessary to be in accordance with the US Army Corps of Engineers Coastal Engineering Manual. This requirement is a standard of **new** shoreline protection facilities per RICRMP 1.3.1.G.5.e (Shoreline Protection, Standards) ***“The size of stone shall be dependent upon the site’s exposure to wave energy in accordance with the US Army Corps of Engineers Coastal Engineering Manual.”*** What should be stressed here is this requirement is for **new** shoreline protection facilities **not** maintenance. Importantly, there is a distinct difference in new versus maintenance per RICRMP. Maintenance is defined per RICRMP

1.1.2.A.83. (Definitions) *““Maintenance of structures” means the reconstructing or repairing to previously approved conditions and dimensions a damaged or deteriorated structure or facility. Maintenance includes only those activities that do not significantly alter the assented design, purpose and size of the structure. Maintenance provisions for marina in-water facilities and residential boating facilities are found at § 1.3.1(D) of this Part.”* To clarify, the previously approved conditions and dimension is the current conditions of the riprap revetment and these condition should remain as such,

**Notably, the submitted plans (Section C-C) show new larger stone proposed to be placed seaward of the existing face of the wall, replacing the smaller stone. Based on the above it is staff opinion this proposal should not be considered a Maintenance Activity but a new application for shoreline protection.** If the Council decides the wall is considered new then the project would be prohibited per RICRMP 1.3.1.G.3a (Shoreline Protection, Prohibitions). *“The Council shall prohibit new hybrid and structural shoreline protection on barriers classified by the CRMC as undeveloped, moderately developed, and developed as well as shorelines abutting Type 1 waters, unless the shoreline is determined by the CRMC to be a manmade shoreline as defined within § 1.1.2 of this Part or is permissible under § 00-3.1.12 of this Chapter.”* Special Exceptions to Prohibited activity can not be granted for private interests. Reference RICRMP 1.3.8. (Special Exceptions).

---

**Additionally, the proposed project alters the assented design of the existing revetment by creating a more reflective surface. As such, the proposed activity does not meet the definition of maintenance (RICRMP 1.1.2.A.83).**

As can be seen by the number and frequency of Maintenance Assents, the wall needs periodic maintenance depending on storm events. Please note if the revetment is reconstructed utilizing the quantity of stone requested, the wall will most likely exacerbate erosion seaward of the face because the size of voids will decrease and cause a more reflective structure increasing erosion at the face of the revetment. Please note based on aerials there are times during lower tides and low wave energy events where lateral access along the beach is available. It is likely this beach would no longer existence after construction of the newly designed revetment.

Please note the site is located within a FEMA flood zone VE (elevation +18) and VE (elevation +14). V zones or Velocity Zones are high-risk coastal areas, known as a Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA), with a 1% or greater annual chance of flooding, compounded by dangerous storm-driven waves of 3 feet or higher (FEMA). The elevation of the patio and the top of the revetment is approximately elevation +11'. Therefore, during a major storm this wall would be inundated, and the dwelling would be impacted from wave forces. These predicted wave/flood forecasts are being presented to explain that the proposed and/or the existing revetment will provide little protection in the event of a storm of this magnitude. It is staff engineer's opinion the dwelling appears not to be built as a FEMA compliant structure (not elevated on piles, no breakaway walls, living space below flood elevation, etc.) and in event of a storm of this magnitude there would most likely be serious damage to the structure.

Also the site is mapped as a part of the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) and is not eligible for certain federal funding and financial assistance, including coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Development can still occur within the CBRS, as long as private

developers or other non-federal parties bear the full cost.

**OBJECTIONS RECEIVED:**

Objections to this project were received from Save the Bay, Town of Westerly (Town Engineer, Kyle Zalaski, P.E.), Anthony Palazzolo, Jr., Ellen Kane, Benjamin Weber, Joy Cordio, Caroline Contrata.

**Save The Bay (letter dated February 12, 2026, signed by Capt. Chris Dodge)**

Save the Bay objections in general states the work proposed exceeds the scope of Maintenance and is considered new shoreline protection which is prohibited abutting Type 1 waters and on undeveloped barrier beaches. Furthermore, Save The Bay states, *“Approval of the proposed structure, which will, without question, impair the public’s lateral access to the coastal beach, conflicts with CRMC goal “to preserve the qualities of, and public access to those beaches which are an important recreational resource (adjacent to Type 1 and 2 waters.” 650-RICR-20-00-1.2.2(A)(1)(a)(1).”*

Save the Bay also brings to attention the limits of Maintenance activities, *“CRMC defines “maintenance” as “reconstructing or repairing to previously approved conditions and dimensions [of] a damaged or deteriorated structure or facility”. . . and “ includes only those activities that do not significantly alter the assented design, purpose and size of the structure.” 650-RICR-20-00-1.1.2 (83)(emphasis added). Aerial imagery shows the steady increase in the size of the structure over the years, and any further increase beyond the clearly articulated standards of what constitutes maintenance should not be permitted on this site.”*

Staff agree with Save the Bay objections as stated above.

**Town of Westerly (Town Engineer, Kyle Zalaski, P.E., email dated January 14, 2026)**

The town had concerns regarding negative impacts to Atlantic Avenue right-of-way (i.e. road and sidewalk) due to the scale of the project and any necessary importing/exporting of materials. This concern regarding construction mobilization was not addressed by the applicant’s attorney at this time.

**Other Objectors**

Members of the community of Westerly have submitted objections that the work proposed is beyond the scope of Maintenance, increase erosion and its impact on lateral access. Although objecting to the project, Mr. Anthony Palazzolo and Ben Weber recommended compensation in the event the project was allowed through the establishment of a new public right of way where a private right of way exists just to the west of the property. Per applicant’s attorney (Peter Skwirz Esq.) the private 6’ wide right of way easement is reserved for William G. Scola and Marie F. Scola and their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Staff defers to the Council and Council’s legal counsel if this requirement could be implemented if approved.

**Applicant’s Response to Objections**

Applicant’s attorney, Peter Skwirz Esq., responded to the above objections (except for the Town of Westerly concern), in correspondence dated February 18, 2026 to CRMC. Attorney Skwirz has stated that regarding this work being a Maintenance activity, *“This is not a policy question-it is a legal question. The Council is not being asked to determine whether shoreline protection*

*structures are desirable in general. That policy determination has already been made and is reflected in CRMC's regulations. Instead, the Council is being asked to apply its regulations to determine whether the proposed activity qualifies as maintenance. Under the plain language of the regulations, it clearly does."*

**Staff Comments on Objections:**

CRMC staff agrees with the assertions of the objectors, specifically Save the Bay's assertion that the work exceeds the scope of Maintenance. As per RICRMP 1.1.6(G).1(b) (Substantive Objections) "*Substantive objections are defined by one or more of the following:...direct evidence that the proposed alteration or activity does not meet all of the policies, prerequisites, and standards contained in applicable sections of this document*" It is staff opinion that this criteria has been met.

CRMC staff also agree evidence has been presented by the objectors that public access to and along the shore will be impacted through further erosion of the shore in front of the structure. As per RICRMP 1.1.6(G).1.c. (2), (7) and (8), an objection is substantive if "*evidence is presented which demonstrates that the proposed activity or alteration has a potential for significant adverse impacts on one or more of the following descriptors of the coastal environment: (2) Sediment deposition and erosion; (7) Public access to and along the shore; and (8) Shoreline erosion and flood hazards*". CRMC staff agree with the evidence presented by objectors that public access to and along the shore will be adversely impacted by the proposed project.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:**

As can be seen by the number and frequency of Maintenance Assents, the wall requires periodic maintenance depending on the frequency and intensity of storm events. Due to the projected increase in frequency and intensity of storms, the continued repairing of the wall will is expected. Because the proposed project does not qualify as maintenance and has the potential for significant adverse impacts, the Executive Director has determined this proposed activity is new work and that such is programmatically prohibited, CRMC staff engineer recommends denial of the application.

Signed



Staff Engineer











