

RECOMMENDATION TO THE ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW

JULY 14, 2021

Application Type

Dimensional Variance

Neighborhood

Elmwood

Applicant

Narragansett Electric Company, Applicant and Owner

Parcel

AP 60 Lot 194

Address

280 Melrose Street

Parcel Size

± 684,166 SF (15.7 acres)

Zoning District

M-1

Variance Requested

1. Dimensional relief from interior parking lot island requirements
2. Construction of fences with barbed wire
3. Height of light fixtures

280 MELROSE STREET



 Location Map

View of the building

SUMMARY

Project Description

The applicant is seeking dimensional variances in the second phase of site redevelopment and remediation. Relief is sought from the interior parking lot island requirements of Section 1505, from Sections 1302.I.3. and 2004.C.5. to reconstruct existing perimeter fencing with 3 strands of barbed wire where zero are permitted, and Section 2004.C.6. for updates to exterior light fixtures that exceed pole and building mounted height requirements.

Discussion

The subject property measures approximately 15.7 acres and is occupied by an electric utility facility with a number of uses including an office building, storage and garage. The applicant is proposing to resurface a portion of the parking lot to remove contaminated materials, install stormwater management systems and provide new fencing and interior lighting. The resurfacing will trigger conformance with the landscaping requirement. The lot will be restriped to provide a total of 429 parking spaces. The ordinance requires one parking lot island for every ten spaces with a tree planted in each island. A total of 43 islands with 43 trees will be required, from which the applicant is seeking relief. Due to the use of the subject property, parking on the site is

required to be maximized for employee and service vehicles, whose need increases during an emergency. The requirement for islands could hamper the function of the site by reducing the number of spaces and making movement within the lot difficult. Plans provided show the applicant will consolidate the islands into an internal parking strip and increase tree planting at the perimeter. The relief should be granted as the applicant will meet the canopy coverage requirement by finding alternate locations for the plantings. A negative effect on neighborhood character is not expected as stormwater will be treated onsite with the planting strips increasing onsite drainage.

The ordinance limits the maximum height of a luminaire to 25 feet. A total of 17 light fixtures will be located between 30-35 feet, above the permitted height. All fixtures will be cut off and downward facing, which would prevent light spillover. According to an analysis provided by the applicant, this would decrease the number of nonconforming light fixtures on the site to 13. The DPD does not object to these plans as increased height can be more effective at transmitting light around the large lot and the number of nonconforming fixtures will decrease.



Updated: July 8, 2021

The applicant is proposing to reconstruct the existing fencing with barbed wire—which is not permitted by the ordinance—on walls that exceed the six foot fence height limit. Per the applicant, the barbed wire is necessary for security as heavy equipment is stored on the site. The barbed wire and fence height are existing conditions and appear to be necessary for the security of the existing use. Therefore, the DPD does not object to their installation.

Recommendation

Based on the foregoing discussion, the DPD recommends that the requested relief be granted.