

# RECOMMENDATION TO THE ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW

JUNE 4, 2025

## *Application Type*

Dimensional Variance and  
Special Use Permit (SUP)

## *Neighborhood*

Wanskuck

## *Applicant*

Narragansett Electric Company

## *Parcel*

AP 66 Lot 455

## *Address*

325 Chad Brown Street

## *Parcel Size*

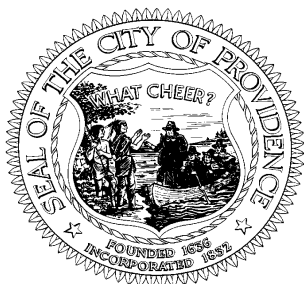
± 67,715 SF

## *Zoning District*

R-4

## *Variance Requested*

- Special use permit for moving use allowed by SUP
- Variance for 8' fence height and use of barbed wire
- Five foot setback for utility facility fences
- Utility facility landscaping



Updated: May 29, 2025

## 325 CHAD BROWN STREET



Location Map



A view of the facility

## SUMMARY

### Project Description

The applicant is seeking a special use permit pursuant to Table 12-1 and Section 2006.B.2. of the City of Providence Zoning Ordinance to change the site layout and structures of an existing Utility use. The applicant is seeking dimensional variances seeking relief from Section 1202.FF. and 1302.I.3. for maximum fence height and required 5-foot setback, required landscaping, and the use of barbed wire. The applicant proposes updating transformers and switch-gear structures, replacing the existing fence at the lot lines with a new fence that is 9 feet in height topped with 1 foot (3 strands) of barbed wire, where 8 feet are the permitted maximum height, and zero strands of barbed wire are permitted. The applicant further proposes not including the plantings (174 shrubs) that are required

every three feet along the fence at the front and corner side lot lines.

### Discussion

The subject property is located in the R-4 zone and operates as a utility facility, which requires a special use permit due to reconfiguration of the site. The facility has operated at the location since the 1930s and is a use permitted through a special use permit. A negative effect on the health of the community or surrounding property is not expected as it would allow for continuation of an established use. The ordinance requires that fences for utilities be set back five feet from the lot line and include plantings of shrubs with a minimum height of 3' every three feet. The applicant is proposing a setback of three feet with no plantings. The relief is related to security concerns as plantings

could obscure view into the site. Per the applicant, relief to permit additional fence height and barbed wire is also necessary for enhanced security.

As the applicant is a utility, securing equipment is necessary for its operation. It is the DPD's opinion that a security breach could amount to more than an inconvenience. Therefore, the relief requested would enhance safety and welfare by allowing for continued function of the facility.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the foregoing discussion, the DPD makes the following recommendations.

1. The special use permit for operation of a utility should be granted.
2. The Board should grant the relief from fence height and use of barbed wire.
3. The Board should grant relief from the setback and planting requirements.