

STATE OF MINNESOTA
ACCESS REVIEW BOARD

In the Matter of the Application of
Kingdom Life Church,

FINAL DECISION
Dated: February 3, 2020

Application No. 19-12

This matter came on for hearing before the Access Review Board (“Board”) on January 10, 2020. The record closed at the conclusion of the hearing.

All members of the Board were present. Board Chair Karen Gridley and members Bill Reinke and Audel Shokohzadeh were present at the meeting in person, while members John Swanson and Margot Imdieke Cross were present via teleconference.

David Keaton and Fatima Porter were present on behalf of Kingdom Life Church.

The issue in this application is whether the application for a waiver of the State Building Code for the purpose of installing a stairway chair lift should be granted.

Kingdom Life Church requested a waiver of the State Building Code in order to install a stairway chair lift at its church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The church is a two-level split entry building with the sanctuary upstairs and the fellowship hall downstairs.

The Board reviewed the application pursuant to the factors identified in Minn. Stat. § 471.471, subd. 3.

With regard to the first factor, the need for limited accessibility when a higher degree of accessibility is not required by state or federal law or rule, the Board noted that the church has some members who use a wheelchair and are carried up and down the stairs to access the sanctuary and fellowship hall.

With regard to the second factor, the architectural feasibility of providing a greater degree of accessibility than would be provided by the proposed device or equipment and the cost of providing a greater degree of accessibility, the Board noted that the church’s application did not provide information regarding the not architectural feasibility. Rather, the church’s application indicated that the chairlift was the best option because it recently purchased the building and has limited funds. The Board reviewed the application drawings provided by Kingdom Life Church and believed that the stairs leading to the sanctuary may be wide enough to accommodate an incline platform lift, and therefore, it may be architecturally feasible to provide a greater degree of accessibility to the sanctuary other than by the use of a chairlift. Thus, the Board determined the church should explore the costs of providing an incline platform lift to access the sanctuary. The Board determined it was not architecturally feasible to provide a greater degree of accessibility to the fellowship hall.

With regard to the third factor, the total cost of the proposed device or equipment over its projected usable life, including installation, maintenance, and replacement costs, the Board determined that the estimated purchase, installation, and annual maintenance cost for the chairlifts of \$8,000 is justified.

With regard to the fourth factor, the reliability of the proposed device or equipment, the Board noted that the proposed chair lifts are manufactured by Stannah, which is a reputable company.

With regard to the fifth factor, the applicant's ability to comply with all recognized access and safety standards for installation and maintenance, the Board discussed that the chair lift devices allowed the user to fold the chair out of the way when not in use for safety and to maintain the device in good condition.

With regard to the sixth factor, whether the proposed device or equipment can be operated and used without reducing or compromising minimum safety standards, the Board noted that the stairway leading to the sanctuary is 116 inches wide and the stairway leading to the fellowship hall is 60 inches wide. Kingdom Life Church proposed relocating one handrail on the stairway leading to the sanctuary to the center of the stairway. The folded chairs protrude 13.5 inches. The Board noted that there was sufficient room on the stairway leading to the sanctuary to maintain a clear width of 35 inches of clear passing space as allowed by IBC Chapter 10, Sections 1009.4 and 1012.8. The Board also noted that 46.5 inches of clear passing space on the 60-inch-wide stairway leading to the fellowship hall is a compliant clearance as allowed by IBC Chapter 10, Sections 1009.4 and 1012.8. The Board noted that the building has a smoke detector and an alarm system but does not have a fire sprinkler system. The chairlift model includes remotes on both landings to call the chair from upper or lower landings if the chair is not in the needed location.

Because an inclined platform lift may provide a greater degree of accessibility to the sanctuary, the Board discussed separating the request for a chairlift on the stairway leading to the sanctuary and on the stairway leading to the fellowship hall. Fatima Porter informed the Board that the stairway to the basement was only wide enough to accommodate a chairlift; not any other devices or equipment. Fatima Porter further informed the Board that the City of Minneapolis has informed her that it was not architecturally possible to install a device or equipment that could provide access to all three levels of the church.

After considering these factors, Board member Shokohzadeh made a motion to approve the application for a waiver from the building code to install a stairway chairlift on the stairway leading to the fellowship hall in the basement and to deny the application for a waiver from the building code to install a stairway chairlift on the stairway leading to the sanctuary at Kingdom Life Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Board member Reinke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board's approval is subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The stairway chair lifts shall comply with the Minnesota Building Code and Minnesota Elevator Code requirements. Only licensed elevator contractors may install stairway chair lifts. Proper permits, inspections, and certificates for use shall be obtained by the licensed elevator contractor installing the lift. Licensed elevator contractors may be found by searching License Look Up at: <https://secure.doli.state.mn.us/lookup/licensing.aspx>
- 2) The stairway chair lift shall be maintained in the folded position when not in use.


KAREN GRIDLEY, Chair
Access Review Board