

ACCESS REVIEW BOARD

In the Matter of the Application of  
Trinity United Methodist Church,

FINAL DECISION  
Dated: February 2, 2020

Application No. 19-13

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.

Joy Lehtinen and May Lou Siyberry were present on behalf of Trinity United Methodist 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.

Trinity United Methodist Church requested a waiver of the State Building Code in order to install a stairway chair lift at its church in Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota. The church is a two-level building with a sanctuary upstairs and an assembly 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 three members who are unable to access the assembly hall in the basement when services are held there.

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 floor plans layouts provided by Trinity United Methodist Church indicate that an elevator or vertical platform lift are not viable options and may significantly impact current wall and floor structural components. The applicant stated that the church’s budget revenue would not cover the cost of installing an elevator or lift.

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 chairlift of \$5,000 – \$10,000 is justified.

With regard to the fourth factor, the reliability of the proposed device or equipment, the Board noted that the proposed chair lift is 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 device 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 back stairway leading to the assembly hall is 42 inches wide and the folded chair protrudes 12.75 inches. The Board determined that 29.25 inches of clear passing space on the stairway is not a compliant clearance as allowed by IBC Chapter 10, Sections 1009.4 and 1012.8. The Board discussed the option of installing the chairlift in the front stairway of the church. The Board noted that Trinity United Methodist Church's application included information relating to the front stairway leading to the assembly hall. The front stairway is 56 inches wide thereby, leaving 43.25 inches of clear passing space on the stairway, which is a compliant clearance as allowed by IBC Chapter 10, Sections 1009.4 and 1012.8. The front stairway has a mid-level landing area that is not large enough for a continuous style chairlift and therefore two separate stairway chairlifts would be required for the front stairway. 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. The building has a smoke detector but does not have an alarm system or a fire sprinkler system.

After considering these factors, Board member Reinke made a motion to approve the application for a waiver from the building code to install two separate stairway chairlifts, one chairlift for each flight of the wrapping stairway, on the front stairway leading to the assembly hall at Trinity United Methodist Church in Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota. Board member Swanson 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