

STATE OF MINNESOTA
ACCESS REVIEW BOARD

In the Matter of the Application of
Faith Lutheran Church

FINAL DECISION
Dated: January 8, 2025

Application No. 24-15

This matter came on for hearing before the Access Review Board (“Board”) on December 19, 2024. The record closed at the conclusion of the hearing.

Board Chair Karen Gridley was present in person, while Board members Marvin Forbragd, David Fenley, and Elise Wehrman were present via teleconference. Board member Jim Weaver was not present.

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

Faith Lutheran Church requested a waiver of the State Building Code to install a stairway chairlift at its church in Culver, Minnesota. The church is a one-story building with a community space in the basement. The church seeks to install a chairlift in the stairway leading to the basement.

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’s application states that it has members who have difficulty walking up and down stairs.

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 indicates that the building is not large enough to accommodate an elevator. The application provides that the construction cost for the additional space to install an elevator is not within the church’s budget.

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 total estimated cost for the installation of the chairlift and future maintenance of \$10,000 is justified.

With regard to the fourth factor, the reliability of the proposed device or equipment, the Board noted that the proposed chairlifts 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 chairlift 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. The chairlift model includes dual call and send remotes.

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 proposed stairway is 67 inches wide, and the folded chair protrudes 12.75 inches. The Board determined that 54.25 inches of clear passing space is a compliant clearance as allowed by IBC Chapter 10, Sections 1012.8 and 1009.4 where the occupant load is more than 50. The church has a smoke detector system and an alarm system but does not have a fire sprinkler system. The Assistant Fire Chief of the Culver Volunteer Fire Department provided a letter supporting the installation of the chairlift.

After considering these factors, Board member Forbragd made a motion to approve the application for a waiver from the building code to install a straight rail stairway chairlift in the stairway leading to the basement at Faith Lutheran Church in Culver, Minnesota. Board member Fenley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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

- 1) The stairway chairlifts shall comply with all applicable building and elevator code requirements. **Only licensed elevator contractors may install stairway chairlifts. 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 the list of licensed stairway chairlift installers on the Board's website at:

<https://www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/access-review-board>

- 2) The stairway chairlift shall be maintained in the folded position when not in use.


KAREN GRIDLEY, Chair
Access Review Board