

STATE OF MINNESOTA
ACCESS REVIEW BOARD

In the Matter of the Application of

Alexandria Arts Guild Visual Arts Center

FINAL DECISION

Dated: January 6, 2026

Application No. 25-20

This matter came on for hearing before the Access Review Board (“Board”) on December 16, 2025. The record closed at the conclusion of the hearing.

Board Chair Karen Gridley and Board member Elise Wehrman were present in person, while Board members Marvin Forbragd, Jim Weaver, and David Fenley were present via teleconference.

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.

The Alexandria Arts Guild Visual Arts Center leases the basement of a two-story building in Alexandria, Minnesota. The center requested a waiver of the State Building Code to install a stairway chairlift to access the basement of the building.

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 center’s application indicated that it has two members who are unable to navigate the stairs to the basement where monthly meetings are held.

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 application and photographs indicates that it was not architectural feasible to install a platform lift or elevator in the existing foyer without obstructing and eliminating common area circulation space or other tenants’ space.

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 noted that the estimated cost of the proposed device of \$5,000 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.

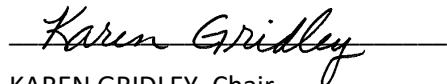
With regard to the fifth factor, the applicant's ability to comply with all recognized access and safety standards for installation and maintenance, the Board discussed that the chairlift device allowed the user to fold the chair out of the way when not in use for safety and to maintain the device in 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 floor plan drawing indicates that proposed stairway is 67 inches wide and the center's application response indicates the proposed stairway is 60 inches wide. The folded chair protrudes 13.5 inches. The Board determined that 53.5 inches or 46.5 inches of clear passing space on the proposed stairway is a compliant clearance as allowed by IBC Chapter 10, Sections 1011.2 and 1014.8 where the occupant load is over 50 on the second floor for this type of building. The building has a smoke detector system and an alarm system but does not have a fire sprinkler system. The Board noted that the applicant provided a letter of approval from the property owner.

After considering these factors, Board member Wehrman made a motion to approve the application for a waiver from the building code to install a chairlift in the stairway leading to the basement at the Alexandria Arts Guild Visual Arts Center in Alexandria, Minnesota. Board member Forbragd 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

