

STATE OF MINNESOTA
ACCESS REVIEW BOARD

In the Matter of the Application of
Salol Church,

FINAL DECISION
Dated: May 4, 2022

Application No. 22-05

This matter came on for hearing before the Access Review Board (“Board”) on March 9, 2022. The hearing was held remotely via WebEx after Board Chair Karen Gridley determined that an in-person meeting was not practical or prudent after Governor Walz declared a peacetime emergency under chapter 12 of the Minnesota statutes due to COVID-19. The record closed at the conclusion of the hearing.

All members of the Board were present via WebEx.

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.

Salol Church requested a waiver of the State Building Code in order to install a stairway chairlift in its church located at 32536 480th Ave., Salol, Minnesota. The church is a one-story building with a basement, which contains a fellowship hall, a kitchen, and a Sunday school room. 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 indicated that it had six to eight members who were unable to access the basement.

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 indicated that it was a very small congregation with a limited budget and therefore did not have the funds for a vertical lift or elevator. The church’s application did not address architectural feasibility.


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 and installation cost for the chairlift of \$6,000 is justified.

With regard to the fourth factor, the reliability of the proposed device or equipment, the Board noted that the proposed chairlift 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 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.

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 church's application indicated that the proposed stairway leading to the fellowship hall in the basement is 45 inches wide, and that the folded chair protrudes 14 inches thereby leaving only 31 inches of clear passing space on the stairway. The Board determined that there was insufficient room in the stairway to maintain a minimum clear width of 35 inches of clear passing space as required by IBC Chapter 10, Sections 1009.4 and 1012.8. The chairlift model includes dual call and send 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 system and an alarm system but does not have a fire sprinkler system.

After considering these factors, Board member Fenley made a motion to deny the application for a waiver from the building code to install a stairway chairlift in the proposed stairway leading to the basement at Salol Church because the minimum clear passing space as required by IBC Chapter 10, Sections 1009.4 and 1012.8 would not be met. Board member Reinke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.


KAREN GRIDLEY, Chair
Access Review Board