

STATE OF MINNESOTA
ACCESS REVIEW BOARD

In the Matter of the Application of
Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Fraternity Organization

FINAL DECISION
Dated: August 27, 2025

Application No. 25-14

This matter came on for hearing before the Access Review Board (“Board”) on August 21, 2025. The record closed at the conclusion of the hearing.

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

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows Fraternity Organization is located in a two-story building in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. The organization stated they own the building and utilize the second floor. They lease the first floor to other tenants. The organization requested a waiver of the State Building Code to install a stairway chairlift to access the second floor 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 organization’s application indicated that it has about eight members who have difficulty using the 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 organization’s application did not include photos or floor plans for the first or second floors so the Board was unable to determine whether it is architecturally feasible to install a platform lift. The organization’s application states that it is a small organization with a limited budget and therefore, not financially feasible to provide a greater degree of accessibility at this time.

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 each proposed device is \$15,000. The Board determined that it did not have sufficient information to determine whether the proposed cost of the device is reasonable.

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 specification sheet for the proposed chairlift did not provide the distance the chairlift protrudes from the wall when folded but that the Board is aware that the proposed model typically protrudes 16 inches. Nevertheless, because the documentation provided does not include the distance that the proposed chairlift protrudes from the wall, the Board determined that it was unable to determine whether the stairway has a compliant clearance as allowed by IBC Chapter 10, Sections 1011.2 and 1014.8 where the occupant load is more than 50. The building does not have a smoke detector system, a fire alarm system, or a fire sprinkler system.

After considering these factors, Board member Forbragd made a motion to deny the application for a waiver from the building code to install a stairway chairlift at Independent Order of Odd Fellows Fraternity Organization in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota because the organization's application was incomplete. Board member Wehrman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The application for a waiver of the State Building Code to install a stairway chairlift leading to the second floor of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Fraternity Organization in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota is denied.


KAREN GRIDLEY, Chair
Access Review Board