

PLANNING REPORT

Planning and Zoning Commission

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Radiant Life Soccer Fields 24-036CU

www.dublinohiousa.gov/pzc/24-036

Case Summary

Address	7100 Post Road
Proposal	Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use to allow soccer fields at an existing church. The 24.48-acre site is zoned R, Rural District, northeast of Post Road and Post Preserve Parkway.
Request	Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use under the provisions of Code Section §153.236.
Zoning	R: Rural
Planning Recommendation	<u>Approval of the Conditional Use.</u>
Next Steps	Upon approval of the CU, the applicant may install and use the fields.
Applicant	Aaron Underhill, Underhill & Hodge, LLC
Case Manager	Sarah Tresouthick Holt, AICP, ASLA, Senior Planner (614) 410-4662 sholt@dublin.oh.us

Community Planning and Development



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Site Location Map

24-036CU - Radiant Life Soccer Fields



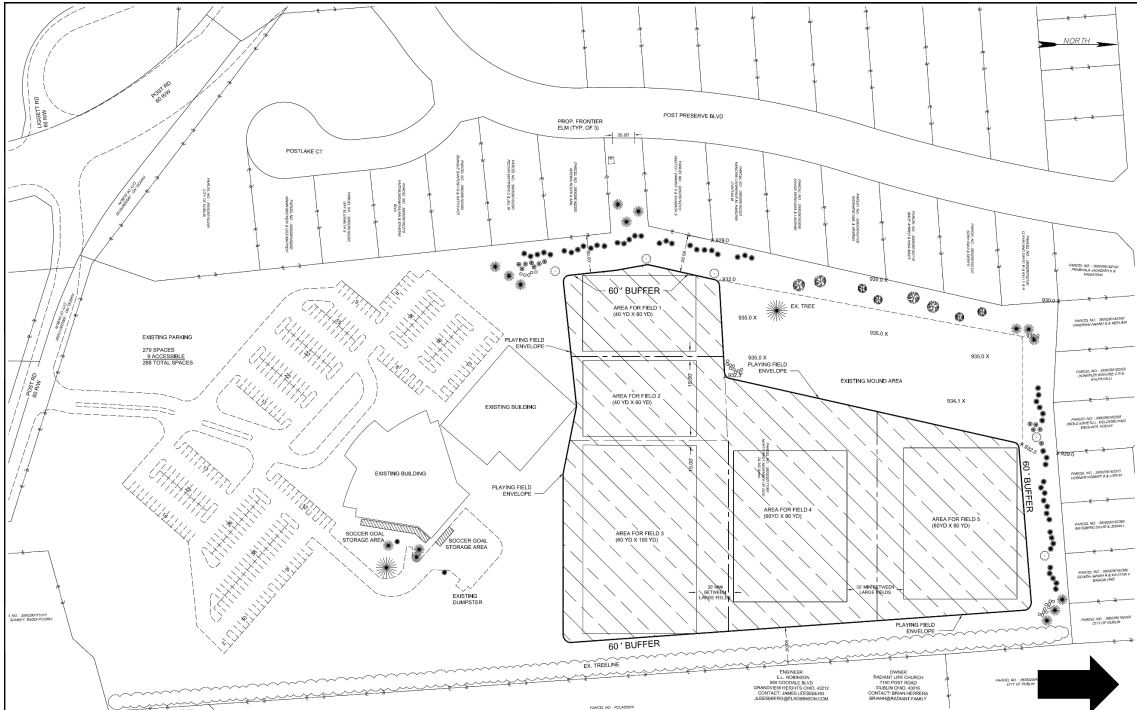
- ### Site Features
- 1 Existing church, 2007 construction
 - 2 Church addition, 2017 construction
 - 3 Proposed soccer fields



1. Request and Process

Applicant statement:

- Radiant Life Church’s mission is to engage with and enhance the community
- They desire up to five soccer fields within existing green space
- They are partnering with Dublin Soccer League and Dublin Soccer Club for practices, teaching camps, and limited tournaments



Proposed layout, north to right

Process

Conditional Use (CU) approval is required due to the expansion of the church use within an R, Rural zoning district, per Code 153.019(B)(7). Code 153.236(C) applies and ensures uses are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood character and do not create adverse effects. The criteria focus on parking, noise, public services, economic impact, and operational details. Upon Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) approval, no further approvals are required.

RLUIPA

The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice notes that Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) of 2000 is a Federal law that protects religious institutions and individuals from discrimination in zoning and landmarking laws. Specifically, churches cannot be treated on less than equal terms with nonreligious uses, meaning that any religious application shall be handled and enforced in exactly the same manner as nonreligious uses. This will be discussed herein.

2. Background

Site Summary

The 24.36-acre site is zoned R, Rural and is located northeast of the intersection of Post Road and Post Preserve Boulevard, between the Gorden Farms and Post Preserve residential neighborhoods. The site currently has a 48,916 square-foot church complex, 288 parking spaces, a single-family residence, and stormwater ponds on the southern portion. The northern portion of the site is an open field and is the proposed site of the soccer fields.

Zoning Summary

The current zoning permits a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet, and approximately one half of the property is currently not used. The church could seek a lot split without a public process based on Ohio State law, and sell the northern portion of the property. Either the church or a new owner could seek approvals of uses by right (minimal/no public process) including single-family residential (13 houses); agriculture, including animal and poultry husbandry; schools and parks; storage of agricultural products; and child care. Conditional Uses include temporary mobile homes; private school or college; sales for agricultural products; boarding and care of animals; commercial grain elevators; and daycare centers. These uses would be subject to the applicable development standards in the Code.

Site History

- 2005, Dubscovery (Dublin's on-line GIS tool) shows Post Preserve neighborhood under construction and Gorden Farms constructed
- 2007, approval of site plan for church
 - Site zoned R, Rural, religious uses permitted by-right on parcels over 5 acres
 - Shows "future construction" on north side of property, but no soccer fields
 - Dubscovery shows church and berm under construction; Post Preserve neighborhood is complete
- 2011, zoning update for R, Rural zone
 - Religious uses are permitted as CU on lots larger than 5 acres
- 2012 - 2016, Dubscovery shows 3 sets of soccer goals in more-manicured lawn area, close to existing main church building
- 2017, church approved for additional new building
 - No indication of soccer fields on site plan
- 2021 – 2022, Dubscovery shows one soccer goal in northern field area
- 2023, church starts grading for soccer fields
 - Law Office: confirms expansion of religious use is CU
 - Staff requested application
- 2024, application is submitted and tabled at PZC on September 19 (see minutes, attached)

3. City Plans and Policies

Envision Dublin Future Land Use Plan

Envision Dublin notes this site as Civic/Community, taking into account the existing church use and ownership. Principal uses include government buildings, recreational facilities, institutional and educational campuses. Supporting uses are parks and open spaces. Key considerations state "these areas serve a range of roles depending on their location, characteristics, sensitivity, and management".

4. Project

Operational Details and Analysis

The applicant has provided both a CU Statement and a Management Plan, attached. To summarize, the proposed use is for up to five soccer fields on the northern portion of the parcel. Use of the fields will be as follows:

Practice

- March through November, Monday through Friday
- 4:00 pm through 8:30 pm

Tournaments

- Not permitted in 2025 and 2026 to allow landscaping to mature
- 2027 and after allows a maximum of two tournaments per calendar year
- March through November, Saturdays only
- 8:30 am through 8:30 pm

Summer Camps

- June through July
- Total of five weeks, no daily time frame provided

Per the Site Plan, the applicant shows a minimum 60-foot buffer around the fields to the residential areas. The Management Plan describes a 50-foot spectator buffer to be marked by temporary flags during soccer activities. Specific field locations are shown but may change from year to year to avoid the overuse of individual locations. Previously-requested between-field spectator and run out areas are shown.

The applicant proposes that soccer players and spectators use a bathroom inside the church for sanitation, and they previously noted a nearby water fountain and exterior water hydrants. Portable toilets shall not be permitted per the Management Plan. Regarding trash, the Management Plan states:

- Two temporary receptacles between fields and parking lot, >100' from church boundary
- At least one temporary receptacle per field during summer camps
- At least three additional receptacles during tournaments, one on each side of field
- To be emptied in church's dumpster after each soccer event
- Will be stored indoors or within church's dumpster enclosure when not in use

The applicant clarified that soccer-related vendors or food trucks are not permitted on the site during tournaments, games, or camps. The CU Statement notes that soccer goals will be stored near the existing building and screened as shown on the plan.

Landscaping/Buffering

The homes in Post Preserve back directly to the proposed fields, and the existing mound shown on the submitted plan is approximately 4 - 5 feet tall, as confirmed by staff in the field. The Gorden Farms development has a thick tree row between it and the fields; they have not expressed any concerns with this proposal.

In September of 2024, staff recommended an undulating vegetated screen be installed to help mitigate potential impacts on the Post Preserve neighborhood (Sept. Staff Graphic) similar to the buffering at the Avery Park ballfields. The HOA requested two rows of arborvitae for screening. In order to be most responsive, the applicant has provided a landscape plan that

combines the two approaches, providing screening and buffering for all activities, including the soccer goal storage area.

Traffic and Parking

The applicant provided an updated traffic memo, which now is consistent with the CU Statement and Management Plan, and staff is satisfied. Post Preserve Boulevard, Springview Lane, and Postlake Court are public roads; Post Preserve Boulevard does not permit on-street parking, and Springview Lane and Postlake Court permit parking on one side. Roads within Gorden Farms to the east are private and no on-street parking is permitted.

As part of the CU Statement, the applicant commits to providing a police officer during tournaments to direct traffic at the Post Road entrance; games will be spread out to allow adequate parking. The applicant estimates a maximum of 300-400 peak practice trips and 150 vehicles for tournaments.

The church currently has 288 parking spaces on site, and based on staff research, it appears adequate. Based on previously raised Post Preserve parking concerns, the applicant indicates that on-street parking will be continuously prohibited and monitored by their staff. Two parking violations will result in disqualification of the team from using the fields, as managed by the applicants. Gorden Farms is intended to be addressed through use of temporary "no parking" signs on their property, should their association permit.

Stormwater and Easements

There are no stormwater or easement concerns with this application. No grading is proposed.

5. Neighborhood Engagement and Analysis

The church held public meetings with the Post Preserve neighborhood in 2023 and again in late 2024. They also met with Gorden Farms. The attorney for the Post Preserve neighborhood has submitted a list of requests for the project, attached; the applicant's attorney has provided response comments in red. The City cannot address items that are a RLUIPA concern; however, the applicant may volunteer to address these privately. Staff commentary is below:

- Continuous berming installed prior to any use of the fields
 - Requested height vs. width not possible based on maintainable slopes
 - Applicant has provided screening in line with Sept. Staff Graphic, attached
- 6-foot high evergreens with no gaps; design to be approved by HOA
 - Applicant has combined HOA requests and staff's September recommendations into an acceptable plan that screens all activities
 - Approval by HOA not required by Code; any deviation would be a RLUIPA concern
- Parking agreed to by both parties for on-street limitations and self-enforcement
 - HOA requested 20 parking violations would cause CU to be revoked; CU enforcement to be done in accordance with City Code and practices to avoid RLUIPA concern
 - Bollards requested by HOA at street stub; utilities conflict, applicant now shows trees in appropriate locations that prevent vehicular access
- Fields and usage
 - HOA wanted maximum two fields and no tournaments; applicant did not agree
 - HOA wanted limited hours; provided in CU Management Plan

- No other field sports permitted; stated in CU Management Plan, except for church events
- Submittal of monthly usage report to HOA; not required by City for other CUs, so a RLUIPA concern
- Liability insurance
 - Private property issue
- Waste management
 - Trash receptacles in multiple locations; information provided in CU Management Plan
- Enforcement and dispute resolution
 - HOA wanted a specific process to report violations using arbiter or City-appointed representative
 - City has an established violation process per Ohio State law; any deviation would be RLUIPA concern

6. Plan Review

Conditional Use	
Criteria	Review
1. Harmonious with the Zoning Code and/or Community Plan.	Criterion Met. The proposal is consistent with the zoning and Envision Dublin.
2. Complies with applicable standards.	Criterion Met. The proposed CU has no additional development standards.
3. Harmonious with existing or intended character of the general vicinity.	Criterion Met. The proposed impacts will be mitigated with the Management Plan and the Site Plan, particularly the revised landscape buffer. All concerns have been addressed.
4. The use will not have a hazardous or negative impact on surrounding uses.	Criterion Met. The use will be mitigated with the proposed landscaping, to be installed prior to practices beginning (May 15, 2025). Tournaments are not permitted until 2027, to allow for landscape growth, and then are limited to two per year. Parking and traffic are addressed through the updated documents. Soccer-related vendors and food trucks are not permitted to further minimize negative impacts.
5. The use will be adequately served by public facilities and services.	Criterion Met. The proposal will be adequately served by sanitation and water.
6. The use will not harm the economic welfare.	Criterion Met. This use would provide needed additional soccer resources for the community. Both the Management Plan and the Site Plan, specifically the proposed landscape buffer,

preserve economic welfare of the surrounding properties to the maximum extent possible.

7. The use will not be detrimental to any person, property, or the general welfare.

Criterion Met. The Post Preserve neighborhood has previously commented that the use will be detrimental to them in terms of noise, loss of privacy, and visual and traffic impacts. The Landscape Plan, Site Plan, and Management Plans address these concerns to staff's satisfaction.

8. Vehicular circulation will not interfere with existing circulation.

Criterion Met. The revised traffic memo and Management Plan address previous circulation concerns. Soccer-related parking will not be permitted on adjacent streets, to be managed by the applicants. There is adequate parking on site based on research and the traffic memo, and tournament-related traffic will be managed by hired police officers.

9. Not detrimental to property values in the vicinity.

Criterion Met. The delineation and management of a physical spectator area, combined with an appropriate vegetated buffer, address this requirement. Soccer-related vendors and food trucks are not be permitted, further addressing the criterion.

10. Will not impede the development or improvement of surrounding properties.

Criterion Met. The proposed use is contained on site via the Management and Site Plans, therefore not impeding development or improvement of the surrounding properties.

Recommendation

Planning Recommendation: Approval of the Conditional Use.