

Country club to undergo renovations this fall

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Middletown

The management company said it will renovate the banquet room at Middletown Country Club and dredge a small pond on the golf course.

The management company behind the township-owned Middletown Country Club said it will begin work this fall on more than \$500,000 in improvements to the 102-acre golf course, club house, banquet hall and pool.

Agro Golf Inc. is the fourth company to manage the Middletown County Club since the township purchased the property in 1986.

Agro President Rick Begley said the firm will renovate the club's banquet hall and dredge a small pond along the 16th hole.

The company will also relocate the pro shop to provide more space in the club bar, build a rear deck looking out over the golf course, new concrete walkways, filter systems and fencing at the club pool.

On Aug. 16, the Middletown supervisors authorized the release of \$580,000 in township bond money for the upgrades. Under the 15-year management agreement with the township, Agro must repay Middletown for all costs associated with those renovations.

The management agreement, which expires in 2023, also requires Agro to assume the township's \$1.2 million debt for the country club and pay a share of club proceeds to the township.

Agro must pay the township 2 percent of annual gross revenue from the country club when it is \$1.5 million to \$3 million, and 4 percent when it is more than \$3 million, officials said.

Middletown bought the former Langhorne Country Club in 1986.

The township paid \$1.5 million for the 102-acre property after receiving a \$150,000 grant from the state and a 30-year, \$1.2 million loan.

The course is open to the public year-round. It was established in 1913 along Bellevue Avenue.

"The original license agreement (with Agro) did allow for a \$1 million loan for improvements, but that agreement was signed in 2008 - right when the economy started to go south," said Debby Lamanna, acting township manager for Middletown. "The company wasn't required to spend \$1 million."

Begley said Agro initially planned to spend considerably more on the project by increasing the size of the banquet hall inside the clubhouse. But in recent years, he said, the country club has had few requests for wedding parties larger than 120 people.

Other scheduled improvements to the clubhouse include new windows, outside patio lighting and heating and ventilation systems. Begley said he someday envisions construction of a driving range on the property.

For more information, visit www.middletowncc.com.

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