Area welcomes Taiwanese neighbor's plan to build course, heated range

CADIZ, Ohio — A Taiwanese businessman who now calls Columbus home, wants to build a golf course in Cadiz to satisfy a life-long dream. Area residents welcomed him with a reception.

The first phase of Henry Liaw's project on a 370-acre piece of Sally Buffalo Park will be a heated year-round driving range. An 18-hole championship course will take two to three years to build.

Liaw envisions "a course for all abilities to enjoy — a quality design to accommodate all qualities of players, from handicapped golfers to pros." Liaw operates an import-export business in Columbus and a packaging factory in Taiwan.

The project is expected to cost more than $5 million, and Harrison County commissioners approved a 75-percent tax abatement for the course, which would bring a $1.7-million tax base to the county.

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Beale: Resort to common sense as wetlands laws redrawn

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First, does the project need to be near wetlands? Second, is building it in the public interest?

To help developers meet those criteria, there is an increase in the chances of obtaining permits when building near wetlands. Beall developed a list of 10 suggestions developers would be wise to follow:

1. Before buying property have a site review done by a wetland consultant to determine wetland coverage. Aerial photographs and maps are available to the consultant. It might also be wise to have the consultant draw plans for a worst- and best-case scenario. Have the consultant establish a bright line against the wetland boundaries then add a 100-foot buffer to compensate for any regulatory changes.

2. Be realistic in determining profit potential and return on a piece of property that includes wetlands. Building near wetlands often results in unexpected costs.

3. Design the project with wetland avoidance. Avoid clearing and obtain nationwide permits early.

4. Choose environmental consultants with golf course development experience and familiarity with state and federal regulatory agencies. On-staff expertise in land use planning, environmental permitting, impact statement preparation and engineering is important. Such one-stop shopping can help coordinate the project and permitting process.

5. Have a preapplication meeting with the federal agencies that will review your project. Bring in a design plan and show how it works around wetlands.

6. Avoid clearing to the wetland's edge and allow vegetation to buffer development from wetland areas.

7. Integrate mitigation and best management features into the design. Use detention basins to hold runoff from wetlands.

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9. Plant vegetation with wildlife in mind. The Fish and Wildlife Service is frequently one of the biggest critics of golf courses during the review process.

10. Establish a symposium involving the allied golf associations, environmental groups and regulatory agencies. These groups should be discussing how golf courses can be integrated successfully with wetlands. Such a meeting would develop better understanding between the groups and result in more effective wetlands policies.

Barnstable Fire District buying course for water underneath it

BARNSTABLE, Mass. — The Barnstable Fire District will buy the Hyannis Golf Course. An initial vote on whether to buy the golf course to protect the water under it was defeated, 244-127.

The money measure needed a two-thirds vote to pass. A second vote, after more than 100 voters had left the meeting, passed 144-63 to appropriate the $5.1 million needed to buy the course.

The 128-acre Hyannis Golf Course, formerly Nauset Hills, sits atop a prime water recharge area that feeds two wells. The town will continue to operate the course and use profits to pay off the purchase.

There is a negative impact on the Barnstable tax rate with the purchase approval, an additional $22 a year in taxes on a $160,000 home.

The fire district is pursuing a "friendly taking" under eminent domain proceedings in order to assure the parcel's boundary lines.