

*(reduced to 90% of original)*

## Coon Lake Beach getting a face lift

# Old making way for new

By BARRY CLOUGH  
Special Report

"Buy three lots and get a free subscription to the Minneapolis Tribune," read the ad. The cost was something like \$70 each and only \$10 down.

The lots are located at Coon Lake Beach, on the southeast side of East Bethel, and were sold as 25 feet wide by 100 foot parcels. Hundreds of such lots were for sale and many were developed. Many owners purchased two or more for their cottages.

A Minneapolis developer sold the lots and the "Trib" promoted the sales back in 1925.

There were no building codes then and folks put any kind of structure up with a variety of materials including two by two's for rafters. Shallow, sand point wells were dug and the

rest of the plumbing stood 'out back.'

In time, these systems were just too close to the wells and according to East Bethel Mayor, Wayne Anderson, "The buildings were hard to remodel and still get enough clearance from the shallow wells. Drain fields must be 100 feet from the well now, compared to 50 feet a few years ago. Now only deep wells are allowed for new wells and they must be 50 feet deep or more with the advantage that the drain field can now be 50 feet from the well."

Many of the cottages were abandoned and left to decay. According to Gene Edwards, a seasonal resident since 1950 and a full time resident the past three years, "People built in the area during the Depression. Many just moved away or got too old to care for them. They became worse than eyesores." As late as 1963, Edwards purchased seven of the 25-foot lots for only \$1,000.

Last year, the city of East Bethel received a federal grant of \$46,729 with another grant for 1982-83 of \$69,904, including Columbus Township's share, for the purchase of the property, older cabins and removal costs. Anderson explained, "What we want to do is put the lots together and make two buildable lots out of 12 smaller ones in one case, and then sell them to the public. The sale money then goes back to the county and then through the city to pur-

chase more property." Anyone wanting to sell property may now negotiate a price with the city.

One such lot, 125 feet by 100 feet, will sell for \$7,500. Interested parties must have their own financing and may contact the city clerk of East Bethel - Sharon Hauschild.

Originally the city had intended to condemn some of the cottages, but hasn't because of grant money coming in from the federal government. Four lots were acquired earlier on account of delinquent taxes. The city now owns 17 of the small parcels.

In some cases, adjoining property owners may purchase the lots or they will be sold as 125 by 100 foot parcels for new construction.

Commenting on the federal grant money, Anderson said, "I think it's one of the greatest things that happened for this area. The city council feels this is one of the most important projects for the city." The American asked Edwards how he felt about the block grant money and he exclaimed, "More, more! We need these federal monies."

Jerry Casper of Casper Excavating, Cedar, told the American, "The cottages were rotten, wood was completely gone. They went down like nothing. There's no salvagable material."



INSPECTING THE roof on one of the old cabins is East Bethel Mayor Wayne Anderson. Half the roof was missing. [Photos by Barry Clough]



BEFORE ... The destruction of a 1920's cottage begins. Jerry Casper of Casper Excavation mans the backhoe.



AFTER ... Demolition is complete on a cottage that once was part