

\$100,000 — a small price to pay for less clutter

By DAPHNE SASHIN

SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

WINTER PARK — In real estate, more money means a better view.

And for one Winter Park multimillionaire and his neighbors, it means no more ugly power poles and wires in sight.

Retired businessman Steve Goldman, 57, footed the bill of about \$100,000 to have the lines buried underground on two streets.

Venetian Way and Azalea Place in Maitland Shores are the first to participate in a city program that lets neighbors share the cost to speed up the process of getting their power lines buried. Otherwise, it could take decades for workers to get to their section of town.

The program was designed so that the city would split the bill with residents, who would pay about \$3,000 to \$6,000 or more per household.

Goldman figured it was easier to dig into his own pockets than wait for a supermajority of neighbors to approve

POWER

FROM PAGE B1

the project, especially knowing that not everyone could afford to participate.

"That was pretty wonderful," said Denise Eskola, design and engineering manager for the city's electric utility. "He's a very civic-oriented gentleman and wants to see it happen."

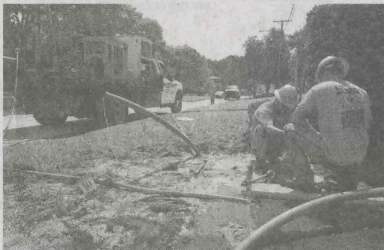
The cost was no hardship for the philanthropist and composer, who sold his Maitland computer data-storage company DPT in 1999.

Besides covering the neighborhood's share of burying main power lines, Goldman paid to move cable wires underground, bury electric lines to individual homes and install decorative street lights on two-thirds of Venetian Way and most of Azalea Place, affecting about two dozen homes.

"If you don't want any telephone poles, that's what it takes," Goldman said by phone from the south of France, where he is vacationing.

Goldman encourages others with means to do the same.

"The one single thing that



RICARDO RAMÍREZ BUXEDA/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Groundman Robin Taylor (left) and lineman Jonathan Russell of Hypower Inc. bury power lines along Venetian Way in Winter Park.

you could do that improves the quality of the environment is to get rid of the power lines," Goldman said. "It's going to increase your property values; it's going to make the system more reliable. . . . It's silly to pinch that particular penny."

His other neighborhood projects include replacing the bridge at the end of his street and dredging a canal that borders his 5-acre estate. Goldman doesn't expect anything from his neighbors, but in this case, some have offered to pitch in.

Tom Childers, a longtime

friend of Goldman's who is building a house down the street, said he plans to contribute "to the extent that I can."

"One problem that we, and I think a lot of Winter Park residents have had over the years, is dealing with power crews who butcher the trees in order to maintain the lines," Childers said. "From that perspective alone, the under-grounding was a great idea."

Daphne Sashin can be reached at
dsashin@orlandosentinel.com
or 407-650-6361.