



CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Report by Virginia Snyder, East Side Improvement Committee

MEETING DATE: July 7, 1993

PREPARED BY: City Clerk

RECOMMENDED ACTION: None required.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Attached please find report by Virginia Snyder, Lodi East Side Improvement Committee. Mrs. Snyder will be present at the July 7, 1993 City Council meeting to present this report.

FUNDING: None required.


Jennifer M. Perrin
City Clerk

COUNC130/TXTA.02J/COUNCOM

APPROVED: _____

THOMAS A. PETERSON
City Manager



July 7, 1993

TO: City Council, Jim Schroeder, Tom Peterson, Bob McNatt

FROM: Virginia Snyder, Eastside Improvement Committee

RE: Mayor Pennino's request for update on Code Enforcement

At the request of Mayor Pennino, this report deals with code enforcement in Lodi.

Gentlemen, I would like to be able to tell you that code enforcement in Lodi is working, and that citizen complaints are being handled in a timely manner. Unfortunately, I'm not able to do that. For the most part, code enforcement, especially of the "ugly ordinance" is a dismal failure.

We've talked with Mr. Schroeder and other city officials, and are told that top priority is given to complaints regarding conditions that threaten life and safety. This is most certainly appropriate, and we're in full agreement with that policy.

Building inspections are given second highest priority. Builders are paying higher fees now, and the city has agreed to provide prompt attention to their needs in exchange for the higher fees. We can understand the urgency any contractor would attach to his or her particular project needs.

At the bottom of the priority list comes citizen complaints. At present, very little, if anything, is being done to address those very real concerns. We get different figures, but it seems that anywhere from five percent to twenty-five percent of the code enforcement officer's time is actually being spent on citizen complaints, and that time is allocated to the situations that are dangerous health and safety violations. This means that if a citizen calls to complain about piles of trash and debris, junked cars, or unkempt yards, nothing will be done.

The city employs four building inspectors and one code enforcement officer. Unless we are building contractors, we are paying handsome salaries for services that are not available to the average taxpayer.

Over two months ago, the Eastside Improvement Committee filed a stack of complaints with Mr. Schroeder. Raena Wright and I met with Mr. Schroeder on June 23 to ask for a follow-up on those complaints. We wanted to know which ones have been resolved, and which ones are still pending. Mr. Schroeder could not give us that information, which indicates that accurate records are not being kept, nor are our complaints

being tracked.

Mr. Schroeder did tell us of increasing rat problems in Lodi. After reading about the sixteen deaths in the Southwest that have been linked to a virus carried by rodents, I read in the News-Sentinel on June 16 that there are unconfirmed reports of illnesses in Northern California that seem to be related to dust carrying remnants of infected rodents' urine, feces, or saliva. I'd like to stress that these are unconfirmed reports, but with an increasing rat population in Lodi, this is something that needs to be closely followed.

There are so many breeding grounds for rats and other vermin in Lodi, particularly on the eastside. With vigorous code enforcement, these piles of trash, overflowing garbage bins, and other hazards could be eliminated.

Our community is poised to encourage new business to locate in Lodi. We need those jobs. We also need to be able to show any prospective employer that our city is a clean, attractive place to live and to do business. When the recent visitors from our sister city in Japan visited Lodi, I wondered whether they would get to Carnegie Forum by Cherokee Lane, and down either East Pine Street or East Lodi Avenue, past the buildings with sheets and rags flopping out open windows, used tires discarded among the weeds in front yards, and garbage spilling out of trash cans that stay permanently at curbside. I don't know which route the Japanese visitors took, but my guess would be they came into town from I-5 or Westlane.

In cooperation with Mr. Schroeder and his staff, beginning this month, Raena Wright, chairwoman of our "Ugly Ordinance" team, will begin mailing out complaint letters to property owners to try to enlist a voluntary cleanup of code violations. If there is no response to a polite request, she and her team will personally visit the site and note whether any changes have been made. If nothing has been done, a formal complaint will be filed with the city. This is where the process breaks down. The complaints sit for months and years at city hall, and no action is being taken. When offenders know a law is not being enforced, there is no incentive for them to comply, and the downward spiral toward slums continues.

There are ~~three~~⁴ actions The Eastside Improvement Committee does urgently and respectfully request that you, the Lodi City Council implement:

1. we ask you to make a firm commitment to neighborhood preservation and code enforcement in Lodi;
2. that you direct the City Manager to do a personnel study within thirty days to find out why almost nothing is being

done in the way of code enforcement;

3. during the next contract negotiations with California Waste, we request that you include a provision for a yearly city-wide cleanup when citizens could place discarded furniture and other debris at curbside for pickup;

4. \$25,000 in block grant monies has been ^{set} aside for code enforcement. I believe those funds become available in July. Mr. Schroeder told us this was an effort to save a job. To date, we have no information on precisely how that money is to be spent. Since this money is designated for low and middle income residents, we would like to know exactly how it is to be used. At present, there is no additional staffing in code enforcement, and obviously, that amount is not going to create another job. If it's being used to help pay the salary of someone who's already on the city payroll, we would like to know how this would directly benefit low and middle-income citizens.

If this report sounds as if we're picking on Mr. Schroeder, that is not the case. He has been very forthcoming with information, and has made himself available when we wanted to meet with him.

Throughout the city, there seems to be a general awakening to our problems. Neighborhood Watch groups on the eastside are beginning to take back their neighborhoods, and many residents are upgrading their property. Responsible citizens are willing to do their part, but we need the full cooperation and authority of city government behind our efforts. Please help us.

Hunt for deadly rodent begins

A new hot line offers information on mysterious virus

The Associated Press
ATLANTA — Federal health investigators have found new evidence that a deadly mystery illness in the Southwest is a new type of rodent virus, and they have begun lab tests to track down its source.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned it would take another month to figure out if the suspected virus causes the ailment and to determine which rodent carries it.

The agency also opened a national hot line Thursday with information about the disease.

"We are very concerned about the possible ongoing transmis-

sion," said Dr. James Hughes, director of the agency's Center for Infectious Diseases. "None of us ever said the outbreak was over."

The disease surfaced this spring among young, healthy people in the Southwest, mostly Navajos. Some died within hours. Not all the cases have been on or near the Navajo Reservation, which covers parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

The CDC had counted 25 cases by Thursday afternoon — 17 in New Mexico, five in Arizona, two in Colorado and one in Utah. It was investigating 13 deaths suspected of being caused by the ill-

ness — eight in New Mexico, four in Arizona and one in Colorado.

Officials in New Mexico reported one additional case Thursday, and Utah has reported one death. CDC spokesman Bob Howard said late Thursday the agency had added one case and a death to its totals, but he had no details.

The latest death tentatively linked to the outbreak was that of a 22-year-old Indian woman in New Mexico who died Wednesday. More tests were needed to confirm the infection, state officials said.

The CDC's national hot line is 1-800-532-9929.

5/10/93 Lone News Bulletin Mystery illness strikes again

The Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. — After a nearly two-week reprieve in new cases of a mystery illness that has claimed 11 lives, health officials on Wednesday reported three new suspected cases.

Researchers also said they had found more evidence that the flu-like illness might be caused by a virus found in rodent droppings. Six of nine people tested have had antibodies to the Hantavirus virus, said Dr. Norton Kalishman, chief medical officer for the New Mexico Health Department.

Of 18 confirmed cases of the ill-

ness since early March, seven in New Mexico and four in Arizona have been fatal. Most victims have been young, healthy Navajos.

Wednesday's cases, if confirmed, would be the first since May 28, when a 13-year-old girl collapsed near Gallup and died the following day.

"It is not abating," Kalishman said of the disease.

Some strains of Hantavirus have up to a 42-day incubation period, meaning it can take that long for a person to develop symptoms of the disease after they are exposed.

At least two of the new suspected cases will be treated with

the experimental drug ribavirin, which has been effective in treating the strains of Hantavirus found in China, Kalishman said. He did not know how the third would be treated.

Kalishman said he did not know the condition of the patients. He said it would take weeks to determine if they are suffering from the mystery illness.

"There's nothing we can do other than to send the blood out for tests," he said.

One case reported Wednesday involved a 20-year old woman from northwestern New Mexico.

1/12/93
Lodi News & Times

Mystery illness in NorCal suspected

The Associated Press

to the Department before the cases in Four Corners made the news, Taylor said. "A physician read about the disease in the press and said he thought one of his patients might have fit the pattern," she said.

The state was awaiting confirmation from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta for confirmation that the cases were in fact the mystery illness, Lewis said.

Taylor said authorities were gathering information on the cases for the CDC and the investigation is incomplete. However, she said, authorities are reasonably certain that two of the victims were not exposed in San Francisco.

Taylor said the two victims were young, healthy individuals who got very sick and died two months ago.

"We were trying to put the pieces together when the big uproar occurred about Four Corners," she said.

The CDC reported Tuesday it was investigating a 16th death possibly related to the illness. There have been 30 cases in total.

Investigators believe the flu-like illness, which appears to lead to respiratory failure, may be caused by a virus carried by an unspecified rodent. It is believed to be transmitted when people breathe dust carrying remnants of the infected rodents' urine, feces or saliva, the CDC has said.

SAN FRANCISCO — Health officials say there may be up to five unconfirmed Northern California victims of the so-called mystery illness that has caused up to 16 deaths in the Four Corners region of the Southwest.

The state Department of Health reported that two of the possible victims were alive. Of the three victims reported by the San Francisco Department of Public Health, two had died and one was missing.

"There are two possible cases of the illness but we have no confirmation," said Scott Lewis, a spokesman for the state health department.

Lewis could not confirm the ages or genders of the possible victims, nor their location. He did say both were hospitalized in Northern California and on ventilators.

Dr. Frances Taylor, director of the bureau of epidemiology and disease control for the San Francisco Department of Public Health, said the two who died in April "possibly fit the case definition" of the mystery illness. She said the third was less likely to have had the illness because the episode occurred last August. The Department currently has no contact with that patient. Taylor did not know the age or gender of the three patients.

Taylor emphasized that there was no immediate risk of any kind for residents of the San Francisco Bay area. "It happened awhile ago," she said. "It is not clear if the infection happened in San Francisco. The fact that the patients were treated here doesn't mean we have the disease here," she said.

Two of the cases were reported

Mystery illness can strike anywhere, researchers say

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The family of viruses responsible for the mystery disease that has killed 16 people in the Southwest is found in rats in cities around the world and could strike humans anywhere, a researcher said Thursday.

Because the virus does not spread from one person to another, these outbreaks can be contained by controlling rodent populations, said virologist Stephen S. Morse of The Rockefeller University in New York.

Also Thursday, the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported finding genetic material from a newly recognized rodent virus in two victims, meaning that the virus almost cer-

The officials also reported that three people in the Southwest had been infected with the virus in 1991 and 1992.

The virus is a member of the family called hantaviruses, named for the Hantan River in Korea, where the first one was discovered.

That virus, called the Hantaan virus, had infected thousands of soldiers during the Korean conflict in the 1950s, causing a disease called Korean hemorrhagic fever. The virus itself was not identified until more than 20 years later.

The outbreak in the Southwest is still under investigation, but "it's very plausible epidemiological" that the newly recognized hantavirus is the cause of the outbreak, said the CDC's Arnold Kaufmann, a director of the investigation.

of hantavirus infection in the United States. Hantaviruses have been found in common rats in American cities and in other wild American rodents, but until now have not been known to make the leap to humans, Kaufmann said.

The outbreak is an example of a phenomenon that researchers say is becoming increasingly common: the sudden appearance of previously unknown viruses, some of them deadly.

"These infections are increasing, the conditions that precipitate them are increasing," said Morse, author of a new book entitled "Emerging Viruses."

"In the foreseeable future, infectious disease will remain a major cause of death and disease, even in the United States where we have enjoyed a high standard of

On Wednesday, California state health officials reported five cases of what seemed to be the same illness in Northern California, including two cases that were fatal.

While officials await studies to determine whether the Southwest hantavirus was responsible, Morse said more cases are almost certain to be reported from elsewhere. But that does not necessarily mean that the outbreak is spreading.

"When you find an outbreak like this, you can almost always find many others who have been infected," he said.

The most dramatic symptom of the disease is a build-up of fluid in the lungs that causes difficulty breathing. That condition can be caused by many other things, making it easy to misdiagnose the infection, Kaufmann said.

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4/15/93
Lodi News-Examiner

Mystery illness in NorCal suspected

The Associated Press

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