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LILI TAKES THE HELM

**NEWLY
INSTALLED
MAYOR IS
"BOSSE" AND
PROUD**

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LILI TAKES THE HELM

Newly installed Mayor is “Bosse” and proud

By Nancy Yeang

How does it feel to be the ninth female mayor?

[It's] so exciting, I'm so honored. For me, one of the biggest highlights of the installation was looking at all the mayors that we've had and realizing that after 100 years I'm the ninth mayor. Having all the past living [female] mayors be part of the installation and [being] able to showcase them and [seeing] all the remarkable things that they did under their leadership; their leadership really changed the landscape of who we are. For example, Vicki Reynolds, we were able to stand in the Wallis because that was her vision. Linda Briskman, in that building is the defibrillator. That was her idea. It's so exciting to follow in their footsteps and have them as part of the Centennial year and I just want to learn from them.

Part of the other priority is having the future leaders. I invited all the girl presidents of all the schools and the cadets and the Girl Scouts, girls [who] are already showing leadership skills. I wanted them to be inspired by the past women mayors. It was really important because now there's this whole element with little girls and boys growing up that we're seeing at very young ages: if a girl is asserting her independence and showing her voice she's being told not to be bossy. If a boy is doing it you're saying, “He's a leader, he's a go getter,” and that was part of my message and funnily enough my last name is Bosse.

It was a message about women in leadership, and I feel that everything that I am standing here today is because of the women that came before me and those young girls that were in the audience and what they're going to bring forward. It's something that I hold sacred.

What were some of the things that you've learned from the former female mayors?

I know them all personally, but in order to prepare for the evening I met with each of them. Because they've all done so much, I asked for two of their proudest moments that they had achieved during their leadership. What I learned the most is that what they did was something that left a legacy that changed our city. They weren't afraid as women to take chances to do something that [had] never been done before. I think women by nature are very intuitive and they trust their heart and what I learned is it's absolutely important to trust your instincts, to listen to what those around you

say, and that if you believe in what your vision is that nothing is impossible.

My mom was in the audience and she's going to be 91. She's a Holocaust survivor and her message about never giving up, that you just have to persevere, and just being surrounded by really smart, curious and brave women is a lesson that I take every day of my life. The women that stood up on the stage when you heard about each of the wonderful initiatives that they brought, they had vision and they had courage.

It's really important when you get involved in our community that you have heart, that you have courage, and that you're brave to try new things, [and] not even [realize it]. I bet that most of these women when they brought these things to the city had no idea that it would change our city as much as it has.

Tell us about the Walk with the Mayor program.

That all came to me when I was thinking about the fact that I was going to be the Mayor during the Centennial year and thinking about the fact that we're 100 years old. This is a milestone birthday and I figured okay, you're 100 years old. How do we feel? How do we continue to feel good? How do we feel better? What can we do to feel better? This all started for me in terms of just really reflecting on a milestone time in our life, just like I think personally whenever we have a birthday [we think] how do we continue to thrive going forward as we get older. That's where I thought you know what, we need to be healthy. Healthy being really very encompassing of a whole balance because when I feel the most healthy is when [all different parts of my life feels somewhat balanced.] It's not all one way [and] it's not all another way.

I wanted to do something where we get out and we move. It had to be on a Monday. It's a new work week, it's a new week, start fresh, and I thought it would be a great way to get us all one foot forward for the week

ahead. We [will] meet in front of City Hall at 8:30 a.m., it [will be] an hour and a half walk throughout [the] City, [and] we're going to do different routes. Each week [we will walk through] different business communities, different residential communities, [and] different public art areas and just allow us all to get up and start moving, to talk about issues.

The other part that I wanted was something new that was added. Some people have to take their kids to school or they have things to do in the morning. I didn't want them to miss it because they can't make it at 8:30 a.m. Now you can go online on our city app or on our city website and see where we are. I'll be carrying a GPS, so you will know where I am at any point and follow exactly where we are and join in.

I was really pleasantly happy at the night of the installation [that] so many people came up to me and they said they want to be a part of it, so I am really excited I think it's going to be a great way to start every week, and something we could always look forward to every Monday.

You mentioned different ways of integrating different communication methods, like the GPS system you just mentioned, and also being able to text the city [at (310) 596-4265]. How do you think current or even future technology and programs will improve community communication and involvement?

I actually, and probably out of all of my colleagues and even when I was running for office, probably use technology and social media more than anybody. I used it when I ran for office, I use Facebook, I use YouTube, I use Instagram, [I've] used all of that, and I use it a lot now. I think it is one of the best methods of communication.

In addition to everything else that we do, why I use it is I want to be a very accessible elected official.

I want people to feel like they know me, that they can reach me, that they can find me if they have a question, [and] that they can know what's happening in the City in real time. I think that's the advantage of social media now because now you can get on your phone, get on your computer and go on these sites and just like news, we can know what's happening in real time. That's something that has changed over time and I think will continue to change over time.

Because [our city has] always been considered the best of the best, best police, best fire, best schools, I feel that we need to be cutting edge best in technology [and] that we try to be ahead of the curve. We're world famous and we need to be that way

in technology and in terms of communication. Most of us have cell phones and I think people are used to and wanting to get immediate response. Right now we can know in real time what's happening. I want for a resident to be on the street and for them to have a question, have a concern, have something they want to say [is] great that they see is happening at that moment, [and] for them at that moment to be able to send their thought to our city right away and to get a response right away.

On the other side of it, if they want they can have information sent out to them right away as well. For example, if [you're] interested in knowing when all the city council meetings are, when all the Centennial events are, you would text, “I would like to know when these events are,” and then you will be getting [that] information. I think this is something our city needs to do and I'm thrilled that we're doing it. I'm hoping that by the end of my term, mostly everybody who has a cell phone who either visits here or lives here knows that we have this opportunity and you know that we finally have a new way to connect.

You would think to text your friend wouldn't you? I don't want City Hall to be a mystery. I want City Hall to feel open, and that's how I feel as to why I've used social media because I want people to feel they know who their Mayor is, they know the kind of personality that I am, [and] they know where they can reach me. I give everybody my cell phone number and I think it's the same sort of thing. I think we need to be more accessible and we need to be a city that will be a model for other cities. That other cities are going to see this and they're going to want to follow the lead because most of us use texting to reach out to our friends and City Hall needs to be considered a friend.

Pension reform was mentioned in the speeches at the installation ceremony. Explain what you're doing about that.

I actually had talked about this even when I ran. This is an issue that we're dealing with in our city, but I also think this is an issue we're dealing with statewide. Because we're a city that really has responsible fiscal decisions when we make choices, I think we need to also be on the cutting edge of making our choices in terms of being fiscally healthy for the future.

It goes back to what I was saying in terms of a healthy economy and a healthy future. The only way for us to stand the test of time is to have that healthy economy. In terms of when we are making choices with pensions in dealing with our bargaining groups, the kind of choices that we work on together have the future in mind. We can't make commitments in terms of our budget commitments with our bargaining groups. That would not be sustainable for the future health of the future residents and the future businesses. A lot of it has to do with being proactive in the choices that we make. It's just like health, the choices that we make now effect who we're going to be later in terms of our fiscal responsibility, in terms of pension reform, [and] will affect everybody that comes ahead of us.

A lot of this is also a statewide issue and I know that there's been a lot of talk about changing certain laws and we as a city need to support that. I think our bargaining groups and everybody in general is really aware that this is not just a Beverly Hills' issue and we have to all do our part and [it] goes into being able to have a healthy future.

You got your start politically by being active in the Beverly Hills Education Foundation where you helped start the first Apple Ball and Walk for Schools.

It was quite funny because the Walk for the Schools program was my idea to showcase our city by having our parents and our students walk through the business and residential community, so even back then long before I even was going to ever be on city council, I think I always had the passion and the understanding [of] how important the relationship is between our business community, our school community, and our residential community. Even then as a parent, and my focus was so much about the schools, I really knew that it was important that we all were a family, and that we all were a team. I had no idea then that I would be sitting here now, as Mayor of Beverly Hills, talking again about walking through our [City]. It's kind of a full circle.

You were also on the Planning Commission and the Traffic and Parking Commission. How did that prepare you to where you are now?

I spent six years on the Planning Commission. It was the best learning ground for really understanding the important issue that you face as a city councilmember. When you're on the Planning Commission you're dealing with land issues and you're dealing with balance. You're trying to balance the very important needs and priorities of the residents and maintaining their quality of life which is trying to alleviate not having traffic go into their neighborhoods, not having parking impacts, and not changing the scope and the landscape of where they live. Equally important is having an encouraging and thriving business community, wanting to have more businesses come into our city, [and] encouraging new businesses to come into the City. Sometimes you would have a business that wanted to come next to a residential area, and [you have to find] how to have the businesses thrive and the residential lifestyle thrive and make it a coexisting positive experience. Spending six years on the Planning Commission allowed me to learn how to do that.

The level of detail, analysis, homework, study, and research that one does as a planning commissioner I loved. I love getting to all the specific details and as a planning commissioner you get to do [that]. What is funny to me is I still do that on the City Council. Whenever we have a land use issue I approach it the same way. I do the same analysis as I did when I was on the Planning Commission, and I still watch all the Planning Commission meetings. There's still a part of me that has one foot still in the door of the Planning Commission because it was one of the most incredible positive

experiences of my life.

I also spent six years on [the Traffic and Parking Commission] while I was also President of BHEF. I think it's a very important learning ground because of other issues we deal with. Traffic and Parking is also one of the hot issues that residents and businesses really have a concern with. Do we have ample parking? What are the traffic issues? Having spent all those years on the Traffic and Parking Commission also really gave me a great experience to deal with those issues. That was the first commission I was on.

Then I spent almost about a year on the [Fine] Art Commission. I was on the commission when we commissioned the [Yayoi] Kusama piece for the City. I love art, I have a passion for art, but even that commission was a wonderful learning ground. When you talk about art, first of all, art always causes conversation. There isn't a right or a wrong answer with art. Somebody might like it, somebody might not like it, [and] it doesn't make it right or wrong. It causes a conversation, which I think is a positive. When you're on the [Fine] Art Commission you have to make choices about buying public art that fits in with the style of the City, and having spent that time on that commission was also a wonderful experience to learn how to do that.

This council hasn't always gotten along so well. How do you, in the words of the late Mayor Max Salter, "Disagree without being disagreeable?"

Well first of all, I'm glad you mentioned Max, because Janet Salter was Max's wife,

[and] threw my kickoff party when I ran for office. When I became President of the Beverly Hills Education Foundation, years ago he had sent me a letter [about] believing in me, and saying, "You're going to do a great job and you know you have what it takes." I had framed it and put it in my office when I was President of BHEF. You're mentioning somebody who inspired me so I'm glad you mentioned him.

I think it's actually going to be very easy. I think first of all, it's my nature. I'm a very inclusive, open arms kind of a person. I have been President of the Beverly Hills Education Foundation, I have chaired the Planning Commission, I have chaired the Traffic and Parking Commission, and I have sat on other committees and boards. I know what it takes to bring people together and I think being on a city council is very much like living in our City of Beverly Hills, which is what I was trying to say at the installation by having all the clergy, it's diversity. It's about being able to agree to disagree, and it's not personal.

If we approach each other's differences with an open heart and an open mind we actually might find that we can learn something from the other person's point of view and that we might come up with something that we had never even thought of. It's about respect and it's about understanding that all of us, even if we don't agree on an issue, we all care about our City [and] we all want the best for our City. Part of what makes our City so special to me is I feel that we are a family. You know that you're going to be together forever, so how do we make this work? As best as we can. To me it has to do

with respect and having an open heart. It's going to be a positive year and I think it's going to be a very productive year. I think the City and my colleagues will see that we are all going to get along. You have my word on that.

Tell us about your family.

I'm an only child. My parents were Holocaust survivors and moved to Beverly Hills. I was actually born in Queens, New York and then moved here when I was nine which is pretty much growing up here. I went to Beverly Vista, Beverly High, USC, and met my husband [Jon Bosse] and raised our family here. Both of our boys went to the Beverly Hills schools as well. They both went to the University of Michigan; one of them, [Andrew, 25 in June] already graduated and is a resident of Beverly Hills; [and] my other one [Adam, 22 in June] who is a senior, is graduating and moving back to Beverly Hills. So they will be residents of Beverly Hills too and hopefully keep the tradition. They're two really great, grounded guys.

Andrew is working on social media. He has a new app that's coming out, it's called, "Linx." It is similar to Instagram. It's a video sharing app where for example, let's say I do a video and I send it to five of my friends. They all can add to it and make [their] own video. That's supposed to be launching within the next month.

My other son is graduating with a degree in economics, and he got a job and [is] going to be working in business in wealth management.

My husband is a value money manager and a great guy. I'm very lucky, he is definitely my rock. He's the most grounded person I've ever known.

My doggy Teddy, has a Facebook page. Teddy has two brothers who live in Beverly Hills as well. One of his brothers is Lucky and the parents are [PTA Council Co-President] Marc Saleh and [former BHEF Co-President] Annette Saleh. [His] other brother's name is Matie Sharp, [who] is with [retired Beverly High teacher] Rhoda Sharp.

One year from now, what do you want to say about your term as mayor?

I want to say that people will have looked at this year and have felt that it was a really positive [and] productive. That people felt that we personally, within ourselves, got healthier and more balanced. That our business community became more robust and that our government, our city became more accessible. That City Hall was a place where they felt was like family to them and that they no longer felt that they couldn't communicate with the City anymore. That they felt that we were just a text away and that they felt that [I] led with heart and that I was open and that even in some small way left Beverly Hills a little better. That's what I would hope would happen after a year [and] I'm going to work towards it.



Adam Bosse, Jon Bosse, Lili Bosse, Andrew Bosse and Teddy Bosse