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Bosse gets B.O.L.D. for Beverly Hills business

■ Mayor wants to improve nightlife culture

BY GREGORY CORNFIELD

Beverly Hills Mayor Lili Bosse is developing a B.O.L.D. initiative to energize the business community and improve the nightlife culture of the 100-plus-year-old community.

"B.O.L.D." stands for Businesses Open Later Days. It is aimed at organizing with business owners to keep their stores open later in the evening to generate economic activity. Beverly Hills stores traditionally close earlier than in nearby neighborhoods, such as on the Sunset Strip or in Santa Monica.

Since Bosse was elected to the city council in 2011, she has been the liaison for the Beverly Hills Rodeo Drive Committee and the

Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce. She said she has heard "again and again" that "we need to be fresh and competitive."

Bosse was mayor in 2014 when the city celebrated its 100th birthday. She said she remembers that they celebrated the past but also recognized that the city needs to find ways to remain healthy for the next 100 years. She said to do that, they know that people want to go out and have an "experience."

"Beverly Hills has always been a world-famous city, and we never want to rest on our laurels," she said. "We want to be a forward-thinking destination."

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B.O.L.D.

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Bosse explained the problem is most apparent in feedback from hoteliers who said it breaks their heart, but they send patrons out of Beverly Hills for activities in the evening.

She said the community recognizes that the retail industry is evolving with services like Amazon available on demand, and the Beverly Center and the Westfield Culver City mall renovating as well.

She said the businesses also compete with "experience"-driven destinations like Downtown Los Angeles and West Hollywood, but

that Beverly Hills can be a leader in the future and create a similar vibe or energy, and send a message to tourists and residents that Beverly Hills is open for business in the evening.

"Shopping culture has changed for everyone," she said. "We can't have all our stores close anymore at 6. We need to be fresh and engaging. People are looking for reasons to go out and shop and dine."

Vice Mayor Julian Gold said he fully supports the B.O.L.D. initiative and pointed out that Canon Drive in Beverly Hills is filled with patrons every day at the restaurants that populate the area.

"But when they're done eating, they're done," he said. "It would be great if, before or after, they could wander through the stores."

Bosse is working with the business community to develop specifics and she anticipates that the B.O.L.D. events will kick off in the summer, likely August, and continue into the holiday season with the ultimate goal of changing the culture in Beverly Hills. She envisions the first events will feature live music, or the city will close a street to give pedestrians more room and restaurants can hold outdoor dining.

Bosse said she has received positive feedback from residents and the business community, and has full support from the city council, which unanimously agreed to make it a priority this year.

Gold said they need to coordinate with all the businesses to make it successful. Some bigger shops

might not want to take the risk of paying for labor to keep stores open later if it isn't certain they will make enough profit.

"Over time, it's likely that will happen (as the program develops). At the beginning maybe not so much. So it takes a leap of faith," he said. "We're trying to establish that trust. It's just up to the merchants and it's a matter of critical mass."

Mark Tronstein, president of the Rodeo Drive Committee, said they support the vision behind the B.O.L.D. initiative to restore the vitality and change the evening culture of Beverly Hills. "Specifically, on Rodeo Drive, we look forward to creating a lively vibe on the street through ongoing, exciting programs," he said via email.

Tronstein added that every indi-

vidual retailer will have their own reasons for staying open, but he said the business community is receptive to new initiatives, such as B.O.L.D., and certainly receptive to those that will increase sales.