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A Courier Exclusive Interview

Bosse And Proud: Mayor Lili Bosse Begins To Lead

By Laura Coleman

On Mayor Lili Bosse's first day as Beverly Hills' new civic leader, she sat down with *The Courier* for lunch at The Peninsula to discuss her vision for what Beverly Hills can become in the next 100 years and how she, as the City's Centennial mayor, can help shape the City's future.

A staunch proponent of supporting local businesses and cultivating relationships, Bosse is known throughout the community for a loving, passionate attitude and an indefatigable work ethic that has taken her from leadership roles on the Beverly Hills Education Foundation to six years on the Planning Commission to mayor.

Over two "Lili Cobb Salads" (a healthy alternative that Peninsula Managing Director



SURPRISE—Peninsula Managing Director Offer Nissenbaum surprised Mayor Lili Bosse with a special dessert and monogrammed napkins during her lunch with *The Courier*.



NEW LEADERS —Pictured above (from left): Sidney Poitier, Adam Bosse, Jon Bosse and Lili Bosse, who was sworn in as mayor of Beverly Hills by the Oscar-winning actor. Pictured left: Dr. Julian Gold was sworn in as vice mayor by his daughter Rebecca.

See pages 16-17 for photos from the event.



LILI BOSSE TAKES OVER AS MAYOR

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Offer Nissenbaum put on the menu after Bosse's salad invention drew a following), Bosse laid out her plans for helping shepherd the City to become better than ever before.

Healthy City Initiative:

What gave me the idea was that it's our 100th birthday. Whenever we have a birthday or any milestone birthday we always sit back and reflect. We think about what is it that we want to accomplish and everything we wanted to do and go forward with; what we could do to continue for another 100 years. I thought about having a healthy city, and to me that was healthy people, healthy economy and healthy government. That to me is making a healthy city.

In terms of the healthy people part, I really wanted to encourage everyone to take better care of ourselves. I thought what better way to start every Monday morning, that's when we start the week, that we would walk the City; that's where we're doing this walk with the mayor initiative. Every Monday morning at 8:30 in the morning, we are going to meet in front of City Hall and we're going to walk through different areas of our City and because some people might not make it specifically at 8:30 a.m., I've arranged for us to be on GPS. I thought it was a great way for us as a community to get together and talk about issues and walk around and see our great art, etc. I also felt that we need to have people think about having healthy initiatives, and have the restaurants offer healthy alternatives.

One of the other things we're going to have is lunch and learn programs. We are going to have local doctors or people come and talk about different healthy city initiatives. We're going to be working with the Health and Safety Commission on this as well.

Healthy Government:

The healthy government is also really important, I think part of what makes a healthy civic life and a healthy government is better communication. I think there are still so many people in our community that either want to be involved but don't know how, or so many people that live here that were not reaching. What I thought about is that everybody in our City has a cellphone and texting is what most people now do. The issue with technology is that it's so fast moving and we know because it changes everyday. One thing is, most people that have cellphones, text; and to me that is the best way and easy way to reach so many people. It was my idea to come up with this and there's that phone number now (TEXT

BH: 310-596-4265) which you can directly text the City and ask for any information that you have, you'll get a response right away. If you choose or want to know when the City Council meetings are happening, you can ask where it's at, or where any meeting is. This is a great way to communicate with the City and have real time answers and I think it's the way for the future. I think it's how people are communicating now and hopefully it will be another way to get more people involved. So I was really excited about the Text BH. I'm also going to be having Town Hall meetings for businesses specifically and for residents. I think it will give us an opportunity to hear different ideas, have that dialogue.

Healthy Economy:

Healthy City to me is the healthy people, and it also has to do with a healthy economy and healthy government. So in terms of the healthy economy, I think the pension issue is that; has to be a priority and is the priority. I think it has to do with the choices that we as a council and community our making in terms of making new hires, in terms of being in the forefront of state legislation, in terms of working with our bargaining groups to let them know which they do our predicament. It's not just a City issue, but also a statewide issue. Everybody knows that in order to have a healthy government, you have to spend wisely. You can't just be continuing down the spiral that many cities have gone down. We have leadership that understands it and residents that understand it. It's basically making those smart choices. I think it's working with our bargaining groups, putting more money aside down to help bring down the pension cost that we have.

A huge part that makes our City important is our businesses. I want at every council meeting, I've come up with a 60 second shout out, we're going to showcase a business. It's really meant to let the community know that at every council meeting we're going to talk about a business and showcase them. It's a way for people to have business as part of the forefront at every council meeting and it's teamwork.

A Beverly Hills Dog Park:

Part of what I was thinking was that a lot of us are animal lovers and we see a lot people out walking their dogs and when I ran for office one of the things that people said to me is that they wanted a place, a dog park in our City. We've been talking about it and this is the year that we have to make it happen. I think we need to be creative and find a location and test it out. What my biggest priority is that we absolutely become a City of 'yes', whether

it's for the business or residents. My personality is that I'm an optimist and I think that we can do anything and achieve anything. So a dog park is an example of that. My vision is that this year we will make that happen.

What was on the table (last year) was Roxbury Park, and there were residents that were for it and some that weren't for it. The issue about the Roxbury Park location was that it was small and that it wasn't a big enough size for the different size dogs, etc. I feel confident in finding a location in our City.

One of the locations that I think we should consider is, we have some industrial land that is just sitting there right now. It's off Foothill and Third Street. That is the land that belongs to our city, and in the near future, it will not be used for anything. I feel that we should look at that as an alternative since it is just land that is just sitting there and we're not using it for anything. We can maybe temporarily use that space for a dog park. That's an option.

Women Leaders

I think it's very incredible that during our 100-year history I'm just the ninth woman mayor. I think it was really important to include these incredible women (during Bosse's installation celebration, she honored five former Beverly Hills mayors, onstage at The Wallis), because as you heard, how much they changed the landscape of our City. I really would love for the community to know that I really value, and that we should really value the women who have led our City. So often now, girls are told to keep their voices down and to not be bossy. I think it's a really bigger statement about leadership, and I really want to encourage women and girls, and thank the ones who came before us, in terms of leadership.

My mother is Holocaust survivor. And to me, there's very few of them left. And they are like national treasures. She lost her entire family. And I am my parents' only child. Even going through the War, she always had this really strong sense of optimism and that nothing would get her down. She always said to me that she believes people are basically good and whatever you want to achieve, you can achieve. So I kind of grew up with this very strong message from my mother that you never give up and believe in yourself. Especially as a woman, before the war my mom wanted to go and be a doctor, which back in those days, in a Polish shtetl, was pretty rare. She was before her time as a woman who wanted to go into a profession.

My mother and my father moved to Beverly Hills for the American Dream. They lived in Queens and had heard Beverly Hills was the "magical place."

Beverly Hills was known for its great school system and beautiful location. So they moved to Beverly Hills, really for me. They moved into an apartment on Rexford Drive and within a few years were able to buy a small home on S. Maple Drive, which is the home I grew up in and my mom still lives in. She taught me at a very young age what it means to be a woman who believes in herself and yet has a very strong sense of community. Because I was an only child, I always kind of longed for more of a community, family feel. That's what I love so much about our City, because this community, although it's so world famous, it's all a very small, tight, close-knit feeling of family. All the years I've been in the City, it just felt like I was adding to my own personal family.

Open Arms To The Future

I very much believe that what we put out there in the world, we give back. I think if

we open ourselves up, open our arms up to the world of possibilities, that positive things happen. I think if we personally, with one another, or us as a City, just open ourselves up to all the incredible beauty that is out there, that we embrace it and it comes more to us. So my nature is somebody that is just willing to receive and give all kinds of goodness. The only way to allow that is to be open to it. I am that way as a person and I want us as a community and a City to be that way.

I really do believe that we can do anything. I really do believe that this is going to be a really positive year. We have achieved so much in 100 years, but the best is really on the cusp of happening. When you feel healthy and you make healthy choices, whether personal or in business or in government, you lead the way for what your future is going to be.