

Standing Room Only for Final Live with Lili



Photo by Patrick Waechter

Mayor Bosse presided over a full house at her last Live with Lili on March 14.

BY PATRICK WAECHTER

Persistent drizzle from this season's 11th atmospheric river did not stop a crowd from gathering for the mayor's 10th and final Live with Lili. It was a packed house in the Beverly Hills City Hall Municipal Gallery

March 14. They even had to get extra chairs from the back.

Many of those seats were filled by younger citizens in navy blue hoodies, who attended the event representing the Beverly Hills Teen Advisory Council. A few minutes

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before showtime, some of the teens could be overheard rehearsing their questions for the city's top executive.

Then, at 7 p.m. on the dot, Mayor Lili Bosse jogged through the aisle backward, waving at the audience before making a turn for the stage. For this last session, her usual living room set was enhanced with a display of pink balloons.

Since May of 2022, Live with Lili has brought a sort of monthly talk show to city hall, with the mayor putting herself in the hot seat. Citizens can ask or suggest anything they want but with only one rule—be kind.

"Beyond that, bring it on!" said Bosse, before segueing into follow-ups from last month's meeting.

The mayor revisited the topics of differentiating media and police helicopters; new rules for green bins and food waste (singling out the Courier's March 2 story); short-term rentals, and preferential parking. On the latter, she noted that parking permit zones were always intended for individuals to park close to their homes, not to park a few streets over to be closer to shops and restaurants.

She also ran through a few announcements, including that her final Business with Bosse is happening on March 29 and the upcoming festival MADE in Beverly Hills, May 4-7. She mentioned as well that miles 16 to 18 of the Los Angeles Marathon would be closing down some streets in Beverly Hills on the morning of March 19, but that the streets should be cleared by around 1 p.m. Lastly, Bosse revealed that she would be appearing on stage for opening night of Beverly Hills High School's upcoming production of "Mean Girls: The Musical."

"They said, you get to be a mom of one of the girls, and my first question was, am I a mom of a nice girl?" Bosse joked. The production opens at the Saban Theatre on March 23 at 7 p.m.

After the introduction, Bosse opened up the floor, with matters of discussion ranging from preferential parking to Roxbury Park. One of the livelier topics of the night centered around area students using vapes in school bathrooms, first brought up by a member of the Teen Advisory Council.

"Over the past couple of weeks, the high school has been evacuated two separate times," she said before going on to ask if the city could possibly add "more advanced vape detectors" in the schools.

In response, Bosse stated the city's anti-vaping policies, noting that the products are not available for sale in Beverly Hills. She also stated that while the City Council and school board function separately, she would bring this concern to the other body's attention.

The vaping discussion spurned comments from two others present for the meeting. One woman relayed that this matter had been discussed at a recent PTA meeting at the high school, noting that the school has had a problem with vape detectors having false alarms.

"They're trying to figure out a way where they can incorporate those vape detectors, but they want to get the right one," she said.

Another woman accessing the event via Zoom mentioned that this problem was not limited to the high school. She spoke about students at Beverly Vista Middle School using

vapes that they obtained from an adult who finds the minors on social media.

"The vapes they are getting, both for nicotine and marijuana, are from an adult dealer who targets the students on Snapchat," she said. "I've alerted the school of this, but I've yet to hear what they're planning to do."

The mayor wasted no time.

"In this case, if there is a specific individual, we need to get our Police Department involved immediately," said Bosse.

Another parent present mentioned that all middle and high school students in the city have a convenient way to send reports by scanning a QR code on their IDs, which she and her children have tested.

"We checked, because we weren't sure if it was anonymous," she said. "The principal showed us that she got a copy of the text, and it said anonymous tip."

Another issue that drew multiple comments was also discussed at last month's event, the city's change in enforcement of preferential parking zones.

One attendee on Zoom asked why the city has parking zones if residents are only supposed to park in front of their houses anyway. He also suggested that perhaps an exception could be made for east-west streets, like Gregory and Charleville, "which aren't in front of anyone's house."

Another resident mentioned her issue with parking at her home across the street from the high school, where spaces are difficult to find on weekends because of basketball practice.

"If I go out on a Saturday with my parents, I'm going to be parking two blocks away, because there's literally no parking," she said.

To both parking concerns, the mayor stated that she would take these comments to the Council for their consideration.

Technology was another big item for the night. One Teen Advisory Council member asked if the city had plans to install Tesla Supercharger stations for electrical vehicles, and another community member asked if Beverly Hills had any plans for an official presence in the metaverse.

Addressing the EV question, City Manager Nancy Hunt-Coffey stated that they have already been in touch with Tesla about potential upgrades.

"They have a lot of requirements to be a supercharging site, so we're still talking with them, but we are looking at building out more of our infrastructure for EV cars," said Hunt-Coffey.

Regarding Beverly Hills's intentions for the metaverse, Bosse said that officials are already in touch with companies that specialize in building out virtual presences for municipalities. She also noted their particular caution around the issue.

"We are very protective, as we should be, of our community and who we are. We don't want someone to build a metaverse that doesn't feel and look like who our community is," she said.

Indeed, community was at the center of discussion throughout the evening. Barry Alexander and his granddaughter Grace inquired if a section of Roxbury Park could be converted into a dog park. They discussed how "five generations" of their golden retrievers had spent their lives enjoying that park and that the city's dedicated

dog park on Foothill Road is simply too far away from their home.

Interim Community Services Director Stephanie Harris ran through the process that would be required, including community engagement to determine if there is a need and desire, followed by referral to the Parks Commission and the City Council.

Bosse closed out the enthusiastic last chapter of Live with Lili by reflecting on the last 10 months, and in a way, the last 12 years. Bosse's term as mayor concludes in April, with her term on City Council ending

March 2024.

Bosse said some of her colleagues warned her about potential risks before the first event last May, but she has been impressed with how the community showed up.

"People said I was crazy to do it because there are no ground rules," she said. "I have to tell you, after doing this all these months, everybody has been so kind and so respectful. And not only kind and respectful to me but to each other." ●