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Beverly Hills Loses Motion in Employment Discrimination Case

By Ana Figueroa

The City of Beverly Hills lost a motion in court this week to narrow down the claims in a lawsuit filed by a 67-year-old former Beverly Hills senior recreation supervisor. Cynthia Brynan filed her lawsuit April 8, alleging she was denied promotions and forced to quit because of her age. Attorneys for the City and Assistant City Manager Nancy Hunt-Coffey, (the former director of recreation and parks and a named defendant) argued that Brynan had failed to adequately plead four causes of action, including disability discrimination and harassment.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Gregory Keosian overruled the city's motion (known as a demurrer) in its entirety.

Co-counsel for Brynan, Gloria Allred, tells the Courier:

"Ms. Brynan was a loyal and dedicated employee of the city of

Beverly Hills for decades. Once she reached her early 60s, the city engaged in familiar tactics to push her out of a job she loved by denying her promotions and treating her poorly. We are happy with the court's ruling this week allowing us to proceed with our lawsuit on all grounds."

According to Brynan's first amended complaint, she was hired in 1979 as the recreation supervisor and elevated in 2001 to a post in which she assisted in the management of the Greystone Mansion. Brynan alleges that she obtained several high-profile sponsors for the annual Concours d'Elegance, including Tesla, Chubb Insurance and Ferrari North America. She was promoted to senior recreation supervisor in 2010.

In December 2016, Hunt-Coffey was promoted to director

(see 'DISCRIMINATION' page 13)

Beverly Hills Residents Can Deeply Impact City Through Service on Commissions

By Laura Coleman

With just 35,000 residents in Beverly Hills, the chance for one person to make an impact on the city is extraordinary. Residents who want to get involved in local governance have a meaningful opportunity to do so by joining one of 12 city commissions that help shape and influence the policies which govern Beverly Hills.

Currently, the city is actively recruiting applicants for upcoming vacancies on the following six commissions: Arts and Culture, Cultural Heritage, Health and Safety, Human Relations, Public Works, and Traffic and Parking.

"I would recommend this for anyone who takes pride in our city or wants to have an impact on local government. It's a unique opportunity to put your imprint on one of the greatest cities in the world," said Health and Safety Commission Chair Gary Ross, who will complete his six-year term on the commission at the end of the year.

Like many commissioners, Ross went through the city's Team Beverly Hills program. The program, which almost always has a wait list according to City Clerk Huma Ahmed, is designed to create an environment that engenders leadership, participation

and responsibility by the city's citizenry. Not only do participants get a flavor for each of the commissions through this intensive "City Hall 101" program, they also get to observe the inner workings of the city in addition to deeply understanding the myriad issues, opportunities and challenges facing the city.

Joining a commission "is the next level," according to Ahmed, who emphasized that commissions offer residents a deeper way to engage with the community. "[Commissions] are advisory groups helping shape the city's future."

For Ross, whose commission was instrumental in the recent tobacco ban, being part of the process to help Beverly Hills become measurably healthier was incomparable and powerful.

"We've gone very far, almost farther than any other city, to limit and ban the purchase of tobacco and smoking and vaping in our city," he said. "It was transformative. It was us being a leader and an example to others to really be a healthy city and to promote health over some important but narrow business interests."

The 2019 citywide ban on the

(see 'COMMISSIONS' page 7)

Mayor Mirisch Touts Community in State of City



Members of the Beverly Hills residential and business community attended last week's "State of the City" by Mayor John Mirisch at Greystone Mansion.

By Laura Coleman

For a decade now, Mayor John Mirisch, now in his third term as mayor, has been thick in local politics. Originally elected to the Beverly Hills City Council in 2009, a hallmark of Mirisch's tenure has been his commitment to maintaining the city's small town feel.

At this past Thursday's "State of the City" address in the Greystone Mansion's formal gardens, Mirisch, who grew up in Beverly Hills, was unabashedly proud of the city and his role on the council. From busting out the ukulele at the Centennial singalong during his first term as mayor in 2014 to his push to revitalize the Southeast part of the city to helping create the Historic Preservation Commission seven years ago to his recent emphasis on strengthening arts and culture in the city, Mirisch is clearly passionate about the city and his role in it.

"In an increasingly impersonal, faceless and cold world, it is our

sense of place, the feeling of home and the ideal of community and how we are all connected that makes life bearable and that gives it meaning," Mirisch told the 350 people in attendance at last week's State of the City event. "Community is what all of us should always be focused on."

Presented by the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce, this year in partnership with Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Beverly Hills and Kennedy Wilson, the annual event is always a festive opportunity for residents and members of the business community to get to know Beverly Hills commissioners, city employees and elected officials. In addition to Mirisch's formal address, this year's event also honored the city's first responders.

Among a plethora of accomplishments during his 180-day tenure as mayor, Mirisch highlighted the tobacco ban; honoring residents with the Legacy Resident and Kindness

(see 'MAYOR MIRISCH' page 15)

New Los Angeles County Voting System to Change How Beverly Hills Votes

By Sandra Sims

As election season nears, residents of Beverly Hills should know about the new voting system coming to L.A. County. The new system, called Voting Solutions For All People (VSAP), will apply to the municipal elections in Beverly Hills next March. There will be two City Council seats on the ballot on March 3, 2020.

Beverly Hills elections are consolidated and administered by the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC). The county-wide VSAP initiative brings a number of significant changes to the voting process. For one thing, voters will be able to cast ballots at any designated "Voting Center" in Los Angeles County. Voters are no longer limited to voting at their as-

signed polling place.

Additionally, voting will take place over an extended election period of 11 days.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, who represents the 3rd District that includes Beverly Hills, told the Courier, "L.A. County is eager to pioneer promising strategies that may increase the number of eligible voters who participate in the democratic process and ensure the integrity and privacy of every ballot. By doing this, we hope more people will vote."

Demonstration Centers

The County has opened 10 Demonstration (Demo) Centers that offer the public an opportunity to experience the new fully accessible

(see 'VOTING' page 3)

and an opening for the position of manager arose. Brynan, who informally filled the manager role from January 2017 to May of that year, says she told Hunt-Coffey that she was interested in the permanent position. Hunt-Coffey's reaction was dismissive, but Brynan applied for the manager position anyway, the lawsuit says.

Brynan's complaint states that the Concours event in 2017 "was a huge success" and she received \$2,500 for her after-hours work as she had in previous years. In June of 2017, Brynan went on medical leave for a knee replacement and was not allowed an accommodation to have her interview for the manager job delayed, forcing her to go forward with it on Skype, according to the complaint.

The job was later given to a woman about 35 years old who had worked as a lifeguard in Laguna Hills and had little experience with management of such venues as the Greystone Mansion, according to the lawsuit.

Brynan says she complained to Hunt-Coffey in November 2017 that she believed her age was a factor in not getting the manager position, but the defendant did not take the plaintiff's comments well and gave her "no meaningful response," according to the complaint.

In 2018, Hunt-Coffey denied Brynan the \$2,500 special assignment pay for the Concours event she had received annually in 2010-17, prompting the plaintiff to take the issue to her union representative, the suit states.

Thereafter, Brynan says she was stripped of many of her duties and shunned. In February 2018, her spouse received a call from someone involved in the 2017 managerial hiring process who said those involved in the selection "were instructed to select young blood and (Brynan) had no chance for the job," the suit alleges.

Brynan was reassigned in June 2018 from Greystone Mansion to La Cienega Park, where her job duties became "more menial and insignificant," according to her complaint, which alleges she continued to be passed over for manager positions in favor of younger candidates. She did her best to "soldier on and succeed in her job," but the ongoing "hostility and humiliation" led her to take medical leave and she was forced to quit in February of this year.

Brynan's lawyer, Sark Ohanian, tells the Courier that Brynan had hoped to work for the city until she was about 70 years old.

City spokesperson Keith Sterling tells the Courier:

"We argued that based on the complaint, and solely on the complaint, the city isn't liable. The judge ruled that the complaint was sufficient and ordered us to proceed to answer the com-

plaint. The city will answer the complaint, proceed with discovery and possibly bring a pre-trial motion to resolve this matter."

The trial is scheduled for April of 2021.

QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?

CONCERNS?

**The Courier Wants
To Hear From You!**

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HORACE MANN

(Continued from page 5)

parents an opportunity to share their heritage and cultural experience.

"Multicultural Week gives us a platform to showcase what makes each culture unique and brings us closer as we realize the many commonalities, we all share," said Pedersen. Egerman echoed that sentiment, describing the event as spectacular. "It's a heartwarming and educational experience for parents and students because they get to share and learn," she said.

Each day of Multicultural

Week, parents and student greeters dressed in traditional garb will welcome students. The school grounds will be decorated with flags and country posters. Activities will include regional music, and attendees will enjoy international food sampling, arts and crafts, as well as sports and cultural performances. There will also be a Cultural Museum which students may visit by grade level to learn about the countries featured during the multicultural event. Lunchtime activities will feature table displays where students will learn about the diverse cultures. The fun continues after

school where families will join the students to enjoy the cultural experience as well.

Horace Mann Elementary School will continue its year-long anniversary celebration into the spring. Additional scheduled events include a school carnival slated for later in the school year. Egerman added that 90th anniversary Horace Mann Huskiest-shirts are available for purchase online at hmpa@bhusd.org or by contacting the Horace Mann PTA directly.



Horace Mann Elementary School Multicultural Celebration 2018

Join Us For Our 8th Annual



**WALK
HIKE**



For Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma
Saturday, October 26, 2019

Will Rogers State Park, 1501 Will Rogers State Park Road, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272



**PACIFIC
MESOthelioma
CENTER**
at Pacific Heart, Lung & Blood Institute

*Remember the Fallen, Honor the Brave,
Fight for the Cure!*

All proceeds benefit mesothelioma research programs at PMC

**PACIFIC
HEART
LUNG &
BLOOD
INSTITUTE**

Registration opens: 9am

Walk commences at 10am

Lunch / Entertainment 11am – 1:30pm

\$45 Pre-Registration includes T-Shirt, Goodie Bag, Lunch, Entertainment, Opportunity To Win Prizes & Parking,

Registration at the event is \$50 and includes Lunch. Opportunities To Win Prizes & Entertainment.

Register at www.PHLBI.org/walk-for-mesothelioma