

Mayor Sandi Bloem discusses Election 2009 results w/HBO

Q— First, I need to congratulate you on your historic election to a third, four-year term.

Sandi Bloem — I feel a huge honor. I love what I've done in being able to serve the community the last 8 years and I look forward to the next 4.

Q — How do you interpret the results of the 2009 municipal election?

SB — A lot more people voted this year. For that I'm pleased. Everyone should take the right to vote. We thought it could be a very close race. There were 10 debates out there, where there are usually 3. There was a lot of action on all candidates' part as far as campaigning. It's too early for us to analyze everything. The thing that would be most important to me out of this whole process is to find a way to communicate (with those who disagree with us). We need to see if there isn't a way or model we can have in this community for respectful and civil conversation. We are always going to have differences of opinion. That is always healthy. We need to ask how can we communicate those differences differently than what happened in this election.

Q — Do you plan to reach out to Dan Gookin and other activists who have opposed the mission of the local LCDC for the past 2 1/2 years?

SB — I'm willing to reach out to anyone and always have been. I'll go back to previous answer and say there are issues that we disagree on. It's important that we sit around the table and agree upon the facts. If we can do that, we can move forward to see if there are some ways to pull all of us together.

Q — How important was it to you that all the incumbents won re-election?

SB — I look at what has happened the last 4 years. I enjoyed very much working with the council that we have. They have diverse thinking. They have always shared some good common goals. How we get to those goals might be a little different. I'm happy to be working with the team I've enjoyed working with over.

Q -- What will be your main focus for the next four years?

A — When I think about my main focus 4 years ago ... Sometimes, you're not aware of what's going to hit you. If I'd say my main focus four years ago was the Kroc Center ... we didn't even know about the Kroc Center. My main focus — what I've done all along — is to listen to the community, work to keep my eyes open for partnerships we can form, to continue making this one of the safest places you can live, one of the best places to start a business, one of the best places for educational opportunities. No doubt that we need to continue to bring more diverse jobs here. We shouldn't forget that 2 years ago that our unemployment was 1.5%. Our national unemployment is a disaster. We need to be positioned to come out of this ahead of others.

Q — What about the future of LCDC?

A — Urban renewal has been very successful in Coeur d'Alene. They are looking closely at the goals of those two districts. There are some things that are on the list to complete with urban renewal dollars, like the infrastructure at the Education Corridor. We will continue to look at urban renewal and make sure we're accomplishing the goals that we set out to do. As we get nearer expiration time, we might be able to do what Post Falls did (return tax dollars). Now, those dollars are committed. We have heard the public say we are concerned about urban renewal dollars and how they're spent. This is one of these places where I hope we can sit down and deal with facts — facts are facts — and then discuss possible changes to urban renewal