**Continue to champion community values and work to bring our citizens together by supporting and promoting new community initiatives and events (Senior Program, Library).**

Community and quality of life are an important part of every city. As a suburb, Cibolo is a commuter city where residents often travel out of the city for work and play. My goal is to make Cibolo HOME for everyone, not just where they live. In the last several years we’ve added a lot of different businesses that have helped keep families in town for food and fun, but there is room for improvement.

* **PARKS:** The 2015 Master Plan listed several action items to expand the parks, recreation, and open space system concurrent with growth. If elected, I will work with the Parks & Rec Committee and Staff to prepare a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (PROSMP). This would help guide the City as developers come in, as well as prioritize park areas for development/maintenance/updates and ensure tax dollars are spent in the most efficient way possible. (Master Plan can be found here: <https://www.cibolotx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1723>)

We don’t have to be dependent on Cibolo tax dollars alone – we know there are other more pressing projects (streets, drainage, sewer, water) that typically take precedence over parks. I’ve worked for a Federal grant program for 12 years and have applied for several park and playground grants throughout the years – these grants do exist, and the applications are not terribly difficult. The Parks & Rec Committee, along with staff, could work to identify and apply for grants. Every little bit helps!

Additionally, I’d like to see more community involvement in maintaining the parks. In 2019 I organized a cleanup of Veteran’s Memorial Park on Memorial Day. I worked with the Parks Department on getting mulch delivered to the park that volunteers then moved to the playground and spread out. We also touched up paint on the playground structure and tightened any loose connections. It was a great way to come together to honor our Veterans, and a great way to build community.

* **SENIOR PROGRAMS:** Cibolo has an ever-growing Senior population – the preliminary data from the 2020 census shows about 8% of our residents are over 65 years old. We have two Senior living apartments already, and I’m sure we will be adding to that in the future. For years Cibolo residents have been able to participate in the Senior programs out of Schertz, but as we grow it is time to expand services in Cibolo.

Community initiatives, such as the Sweetheart Soiree Senior Citizen Prom, have sprung up to fill the gap in services for Seniors. The community comes together fort this event and donate time, talents, and supplies to make it happen. As co-chair, it is amazing to see how much our community cares for Seniors and works together to make this event a success. As fantastic as this event is, it is only one day a year. The City can do more.

The Parks & Rec Committee has worked very hard over the last year developing plans for a year-round Senior program. They have secured the Grange building on Main Street and a coordinator to plan and lead the events. I will work with the City to monitor the cost/benefit of the program and identify partners, such as the YMCA and our Senior apartments, that we could utilize to cut cost and add benefits to the program. I will also work to identify and apply for grants to help sustain and possibly expand the program.

* YOUTH PROGRAMS: In 2018 the Mayor brought together a group of citizens and community partners to create the Cibolo Youth Alliance with the goal of creating events/activities for teens in our area. We worked to create the first Cibolo Summer Nights program that provides activities for children and their families throughout the summer months. The program has changed over the years and the City has taken a more prominent role in organizing the events.

Although Cibolo Summer Nights is fantastic, we still have the opportunity to expand programs available to teens. Years ago Cibolo had the Cibolo Youth Council. This program brings students to City Hall where they hold their own Youth City Council meetings and get involved in local government, providing valuable experience and civic engagement. Other opportunities I will work on are public art projects where students could submit designs for murals. This will require discussions with other agencies to determine available surfaces – GVEC and ATT have electrical/wire boxes throughout town that could be painted, for example. In addition to increasing teen involvement, this would help beautify our City.

* LIBRARY: For many years Cibolo was the “little brother” to Schertz, and the same sibling rivalry that happens in our own families seemed to be present between our two cities. Even though Schertz is more established and has many services that our residents utilize, there are opportunities for Cibolo to create value added programs and services that would build off of what we already have available in Schertz. I will work with Cibolo and our community partners to create a technology library (like the BiblioTech in San Antonio, <https://bexarbibliotech.org/>). These libraries help increase technology access to enhance education and literacy, promote reading as recreation, and equip all members of our community with necessary tools to thrive as citizens of the digital age.

Since Schertz already has a fantastic library, Cibolo has the opportunity to fill the gap in technology services by creating a technology library. I grew up without a computer and only got internet access halfway through my Senior year of high school. Filling out applications, writing essays, etc. was always difficult due to the lack of access. Even today we still have some areas of our City that don’t have reliable access to the internet, and many residents without access to technology equipment. As we become increasingly technology dependent it’s important that everyone have access to technology. If we had a tech library we would be able to host classes on how to use the different technology, create resumes, fill out FAFSA and other documents, complete taxes online, and much more. We can also partner with the school district to host dual credit online classes for students and offer space for tutoring (virtual and in-person). The possibilities are endless.

* ANIMAL SHELTER: We have some of the most caring and dedicated Animal Services staff around caring for the furry citizens of Cibolo. They work tirelessly to reunite found animals with their families, and to get animals adopted out (our cat Captain came from the Cibolo Animal Shelter and is the sweetest ever). The shelter is small and could use a lot of work, including increased kennel space, office space, equipment, improved phone and internet service, storage space, etc. During the 2015 Master Plan process it was determined the shelter needs to be three times larger to accommodate current and anticipated need. As we grow, this is not a project that can continue to be placed on the back burner.

Additionally, we have an Animal Shelter Advisory Committee comprised of citizens, staff, and local animal experts. This committee is supposed to meet at least 3 times annually but has not met as they should – per the City website, they have only had meetings in September 2019 (cancelled) and April 2021. When elected I will ensure we hold these meetings as required to ensure compliance with state law and to utilize the committee members’ expertise in determining the best course of action for our Animal Shelter.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like further explanation. I LOVE to talk about Cibolo and the ideas I have to move us forward! Remember to vote Katie Cunningham for District 4 on November 2 (or during Early Voting October 18-29)

#Katie4Cibolo

#VoteKatieCunninghamforDistrict4