



January 18, 2021

Brad Finkeldei, Mayor  
City of Lawrence  
6 E. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Lawrence KS 66044

*RE: Regular agenda item #1 (letter from Kaw Nation)*

Dear Mayor Finkeldei and members of the City Commission:

The land that became known as Kansas and Lawrence was originally the Kansa, Osage, Wichita, Kiowa, Kiowa-Apache, Comanche, Pawnee, Cheyenne and Arapaho nation before White settler colonialism. The Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Wyandot, Sac and Fox, Iowa, Ottawa, Chippewa, Miami, Piankashaw and Wea, Peoria and Kaskaskia, Cherokee, Shawnee and Delaware nations had reservations in pre-territorial Kansas. The Iowa, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, and Sac and Fox continue to have reservations in the state.

With this recognition, LiveWell Douglas County supports the return of *I<sup>n</sup> zhúje 'waxóbe* or the “Big Red Rock” from the City of Lawrence to the Kaw Nation citizens.

The significance of this rock as a spiritual item of prayer for the Kaw people is well documented. It was removed from its original location almost one hundred years ago and moved to Robinson Park, an act of theft and cultural destruction that must be recognized and remedied by returning the rock to the Kaw people. We laud the efforts of the Kaw Nation to restore the significance of this stone by installing it at the Allegawaho Memorial Heritage Park in Council Grove, to serve as an education resource for all Kansans and visitors about the Kanza people.

Returning this stone also creates an opportunity to re-envision this park space, which fits well into the city’s current focus on developing a downtown Master Plan. We would like to see efforts made to better integrate this park into downtown and to create comfortable, safe connections between this park and downtown and to other green/recreational spaces just to the west, including Constant, Burcham and Watson Parks. At least one possible routing of the Lawrence Loop, for example, has been proposed that would create pedestrian/bike access to this park via a paved trail behind City Hall and under the Kansas River bridges. Such a trail would make this park readily accessible and would provide visitors to the park wonderful visual connections to the Kansas River and our vibrant downtown.

We urge the Lawrence City Commission to honor the ancestral and living inhabitants of our wonderful state by working with the Kaw Nation to relocate *I<sup>n</sup> zhúje 'waxóbe*, and also to create a new purpose and aesthetic for Robinson Park, creating opportunities for the space to be used and enjoyed in a more appropriate way by residents and visitors to our community.

Sincerely,

*William J Hentzler*

Joey Hentzler

Chair of LiveWell Douglas County