



City of Lawrence

The Flame | December 2020

**"We Have
Tomorrow —
Bright Before
Us, Like A
Flame."**

Langston Hughes

City hires first Director of Equity and Inclusion

In October, City Manager Craig Owens announced that the City hired Dr. Farris Muhammad, Ph.D., MBA, as our Director of Equity and Inclusion. Dr. Muhammad is the City's first-ever Director of Equity and Inclusion, and he began his position in early November.

Dr. Muhammad has more than 12 years of experience as a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion practitioner. Most recently, he was the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer with the City of Peoria, Ill. Prior to that he served as the Executive Director of the Multicultural Family Center with the City of Dubuque, Iowa, and as an Adjunct Sociology Professor.

He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Northwood University in Midland, Mich., a Masters of Business Administration from Eastern Michigan University, and a Ph.D. in Education Administration and Policy as well as a Graduate Certificate in Interdisciplinary Qualitative Research from the University of Georgia.

"Farris is a skilled listener and a visionary, result-oriented leader," said City Manager Craig Owens. "His skills and abilities will be a tremendous asset to our organization and to our community."

Dr. Muhammad was selected from a field of more than 120 applicants. During the process, the City engaged several interview panels to provide input. Panelists included local leaders working in diversity, equity, and inclusion, representatives of organizations that serve marginalized populations, advocacy groups, city staff, and other community organizations.

Get to know Dr. Farris Muhammad

We asked Dr. Farris Muhammad, the City's new Director of Equity and Inclusion, to answer a few questions to help our community get to know him better.

Hometown: Detroit, Mich.

Places you have lived: I have lived in Michigan, North Carolina, Georgia, Iowa and Illinois

Education: I've earned a Bachelor of Business (BBA) from Northwood University, Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Eastern Michigan University and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from University of Georgia.

The last book you read: It was, "The 50th Law" by 50 Cent and Robert Greene.

The last thing you listened to: For music, it was the album, "The Smartest" by Tee Grizzley. For podcasts, it would be the, "Earn Your Leisure" podcast.

The last thing you watched: The Usain Bolt documentary, "I am Bolt."

Favorite holiday: Christmas

Hobbies or leisure activities: I enjoy traveling, laughing and spending time with family.

Bucket-list vacation destination: Wakanda (LOL) . . . Ok, it is Bali!

Your favorite way to spend a day off: Thinking about working out, but just relaxing instead LOL.

Something you're looking forward to about living in Lawrence: Connecting with people and developing relationships.

What you're most excited for as Director of Equity and Inclusion: I am most excited about being empowered to help lead change and contribute to the fostering of a more inclusive community for all!



Reminder: Holiday Trash & Recycling Schedule

Christmas Day
Friday, December 25

New Year's Day
Friday, January 1

There will be no trash, recycling or yard waste collections on Christmas Day or New Year's Day. If your normally-scheduled trash day falls on one of those dates, it will be delayed to the following day.

This year, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday collection routes will not be affected by these two holidays. If your normal collection day is on Friday, then it will shift to the Saturday immediately following the holiday, December 26 and January 2, respectively.

Holiday Tree-Cycling

Recycling your holiday tree is a great way to return it to nature. When the holidays are over, you can place live-cut trees at the curb or alley by 6 a.m. on your collection day, and City crews will collect them so they can be given a second life as wildlife habitat.



Winter is Coming – Protect Your Pipes!

With winter weather moving in, take these precautions to avoid frozen water pipes:

- Disconnect outside hoses
- Repair leaking faucets outside
- Cover outside faucets with insulation kits
- Keep furnaces set to no lower than 55° in winter months

Bus stop improvements celebrated in East Lawrence

In mid-October, a small, socially distanced group of community members gathered to celebrate the installation of two new art benches at bus stops in East Lawrence. The benches were placed at the intersection of 11th and Delaware, near Hobbs Park.

The project was the result of several groups working together to make a positive difference for the neighborhood.

Velocity Church, which donated \$10,000 for the bus stop improvements, had several representatives in attendance at the small community celebration. Pastor Justin Jenkins said he was thankful for the many partners who contributed their efforts to the project.

"Velocity is always looking for ways to serve others because we believe that acts of kindness and good works bring hope and transform a city," Jenkins said. "So when we learned about the opportunity to support our neighbors by building new bus benches in Lawrence, we were ready to respond. Therefore, this gift given to the City of Lawrence is made possible by the generosity of our congregation and

the belief that partnership with our city leaders is essential to make a difference in our community."

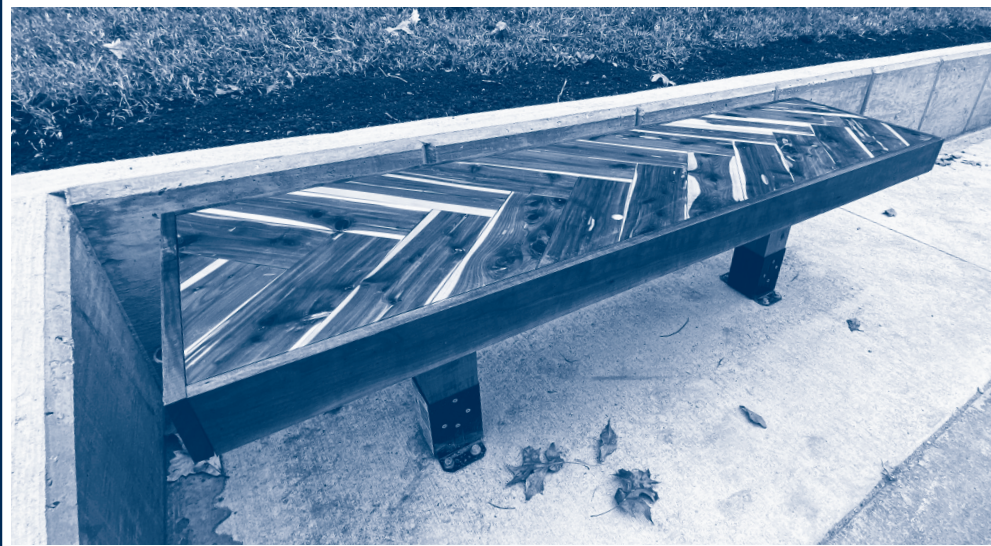
Artist Mona Cliff attended and represented Jamakee Blackburn, who crafted the benches. Cliff was inspired to action when she saw someone sitting on the ground waiting for the bus and had the idea to design and build a bench.

"In my culture, we always take care of those that have the least," Cliff said.

Lawrence Mayor Jennifer Ananda also attended the gathering and spoke on the benefits of transit to our community.

The benches at 11th & Delaware are not the only bus stop improvements in store for the future. Looking toward 2021, the City has plans for 21 additional bus stop improvements that will continue the forward momentum of the project.

For more information about riding the bus, you can visit lawrencetransit.org or call (785) 864-4644. You can also find Lawrence Transit on Facebook: @lawrencetransit and on Twitter: @TransitKU.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**From the entire City of Lawrence team,
we hope 2021 is your best year yet!**

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Committed to providing excellent city services that enhance the quality of life for the Lawrence community