

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Contact: Hanna M. Greer, Commissioners, 614/525-5848

**COMMISSIONERS ANNOUNCE PLANS TO RETURN FRANKLIN COUNTY  
VETERANS MEMORIAL, VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION TO APPROPRIATE  
LOCATION TO HONOR, SERVE VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

*Board action moves forward economic development on the Scioto Peninsula*

Dating as far back as the late 1800's, there has been a desire to create a memorial building to honor the soldiers of our County. By 1906, the first Franklin County Veterans Memorial opened at Memorial Hall, located at 280 E. Broad Street in Columbus.

Memorial Hall served as a veterans memorial until the 1950's when the current Franklin County Veterans Memorial facility at 300 West Broad Street was built. It is now known more for the local and national meetings and events it hosts than as a memorial for veterans or the location of the County's Veterans Service Commission offices, which provide advice and assistance to veterans, active duty members of the Armed Forces of the United States, and their dependents.

With a desire to refocus on honoring and serving the thousands of veterans who call Franklin County home, today, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners announced plans to return Franklin County's Veterans Memorial and the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission (FCVSC) to the site of the County's first veterans memorial at Memorial Hall. The move will take place in July 2014.

"For more than a hundred years, our community has been united in our commitment to honor and serve our veterans and their families, and that value remains strong today," said Commissioner John O'Grady.

Last year, FCVSC served over 24,000 local military veterans, active duty personnel and their families at four locations in Franklin County. This year, County Commissioners created a new satellite location in Northland, increasing the total number of VSC office locations to five in the County and the Board intends to increase the budget next year to address a rise in the number of veterans and family members seeking services from the Veterans Service Commission, and expect that the new memorial and FCVSC headquarters will make it even easier for veterans and their families to access services. Commissioners noted that Memorial Hall provides parking, is easily accessible and is centrally located, all are items veterans who contacted the Commissioners' offices expressed as important components to be included moving forward.

Commissioners also noted that the relocation of these entities will make it possible for the Board to advance important community economic development efforts on the Scioto Peninsula, for which Commissioners, along with veterans, community stakeholders, the Mayor of Columbus and representatives from the Ohio Governor's office expressed support for in August 2013.

"Today represents a "win-win" for our community. By entering into a new relationship on the Scioto Peninsula, we join generous private sector leaders, the city, and heroes like Senator John Glenn and all Franklin County veterans in educating children about our nation's armed services," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "By establishing a new home for our Veteran's Services Commission at Memorial Hall, we preserve a historic building that assures the service and sacrifices of Franklin County veterans are honored, and provide a comfortable, respectful setting for service delivery to veterans and their families."

“When we received the CDDC’s plan, and since, I’ve asked a great many questions. I wanted to be certain that we were doing the right thing for our veterans, residents and our community and I wanted to hear from all sides,” said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. “I’ve done those things and I am now satisfied that the plan brought forward by CDDC is the best way to move forward.”

The Board intends to approve a resolution during its next General Session meeting on Tuesday, December 3, 2013 to authorize the County Administrator to execute a lease agreement to move forward the strategic plans set forth in the Scioto Peninsula plan which includes concepts for a new Ohio Veterans Memorial and Museum, a Columbus Zoo Indoor Adventure, mixed-use development and complimentary park and recreation space.

The terms and conditions of the lease agreement stipulate that Franklin County retain ownership of the east portion of the property upon which the current Veterans Memorial sits and upon which a new Ohio Veterans Memorial and Museum will be constructed.

Franklin County will lease the entire property to a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), which will sublease the property to the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC) to construct an Ohio Veterans Memorial and Museum. Upon completion of the construction of the new facility, CDDC’s leasehold interest in the east section of the property will then transfer to a new non-profit corporation which will operate the new Ohio Veterans Memorial and Museum. The Board of County Commissioners, the state of Ohio and CDDC will each make an equal number of board appointments to the new non-profit corporation.

The west section of the property shall be used for parking and the net income will be used to support the operations of the new facility until the west section is developed.

In addition to placing a focus on educating youth about the value of service, the Ohio Veterans Memorial and Museum will include a designated Franklin County Room available for use by veterans service organizations and other public organizations on a regular basis.

Under the terms and conditions of the lease, Franklin County’s contribution to the construction of the new state memorial and museum will be capped at \$3 million.

The Resolutions to be considered by Commissioners are available online at [www.FranklinCountyOhio.gov/Commissioners](http://www.FranklinCountyOhio.gov/Commissioners).

The Scioto Peninsula Plan is available online at <http://downtowncolumbus.com/home/moving-forward/plan/scioto-peninsula>.

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