

Central Baltimore Partnership founding director Joseph McNeely to step down -- *Baltimore Business Journal*

Jan 20, 2015, 11:54am EST

[Kevin Litten](#)



Reporter- *Baltimore Business Journal*
Kevin Litten covers Commercial Real Estate and Economic Development



Joseph McNeely, third from left, is leaving the Central Baltimore Partnership on June 30.

[Joseph McNeely](#), the founding director of the economic development nonprofit Central Baltimore Partnership, is stepping down from his position in June after eight years on the job.

McNeely, who will be 71 by the time he steps down on June 30, said he's departing to care for his wife who suffered a head injury during a fall 11 months ago and whose recovery has been slow. McNeely's wife is [Patricia Massey](#), a city housing developer who was formerly director of the Baltimore Housing Partnership.

The nonprofit McNeely founded has been a key driver in spurring real estate development along many of central Baltimore's most challenging corridors, including North Avenue and the area surrounding Penn Station. McNeely said in an interview that there's been \$800 million invested in the area the nonprofit focuses on, with 1,100 housing units added since 2006.

"There's a remarkable amount of movement in a short period of time because of the model that we've created," McNeely said. "The partnership never runs any programs or developments. It all happens with partners."

Two of the main partners Central Baltimore Partnership works with are Johns Hopkins University and Maryland Institute College of Art. The nonprofit is one of three organizations Hopkins provides funding to through its Homewood Community Partners Initiative. MICA President [Fred Lazarus](#) was the founding chairman of the Central Baltimore Partnership board.

Lazarus will head up a search committee to find McNeely's replacement. The challenge for a new director will be to help find gap financing for key real estate projects and building trust among partners the organization needs to work with, McNeely said.

"We're moving to a higher scale of projects," McNeely said. "We're going from projects that were \$2 and \$3 million projects to projects that are \$10 million and more. This is an important stage in the history of the organization area."

The next director will have the chance to work on some projects that have long been in the works. Perhaps the most high-profile is the renovation of Penn Station and the [development of an Amtrak-owned lot by Beatty Development Group LLC](#).

McNeely said that Beatty is in the midst of a feasibility study on what could be developed on the lot and is expected to unveil plans later this year. Also, three key projects on North Avenue — the [Parkway](#) and Center Theaters and the Load of Fun building are all under construction.

"We have significant momentum in revitalizing this area," McNeely said. "This is going to be a positive thing for the organization. There's always a period of being nervous about losing a founding director, but the real secret is in the leadership group [on the board]. They'll move us forward."