

San Francisco pro soccer team to play home games at Kezar Stadium

By Douglas Zimmerman on March 17, 2016 at 1:58 PM



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San Francisco Deltas CEO Brian Andrés Helmick (left) attends the SF Rec and Parks meeting this morning.

The San Francisco Deltas professional soccer team received unanimous approval from the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Commission today to play their home matches at Kezar Stadium in San Francisco starting in 2017.

The Deltas are expected to soon officially announce they will play in the NASL, the North American Soccer League, which is the second division of professional soccer in the United States. They would be the first West Coast team for the league. The agreement with the Recreation & Parks Commission will allow the team to play 15-20 home games at Kezar Stadium in Golden Gate Park annually.

Supporters and opponents of the permit packed the Recreation and Parks Commission meeting room Thursday morning at San Francisco's City Hall. With the hearing room full, some people had to watch the meeting on television monitors in the City Hall's North Light Atrium.

A majority of the speakers during the public comments were in support of the team playing at Kezar. Several speakers complained about the possible disruptions caused by traffic on game days as well as the sale of alcohol in the stadium.

The Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council had come out **against the team playing at Kezar** Stadium citing fears of privatization of the facility and the selling of alcohol at the stadium, which had previously been prohibited.

"We've taken into great consideration what the the impact will be on the neighborhood," said Commissioner Megan Levitan after the public comments. "We feel very good about what Brian [Andrés Helmick] and the Deltas will do relative to some of those concerns. We think overall, on balance, this will be good for the neighborhood."

According to **the Examiner**, the Deltas will spend \$460,000 on improvements to the stadium including new lighting, a new sound system, improved locker rooms, bathroom upgrades, and improved stadium seating. The permit, which will charge the Deltas \$30,000 per year to play at Kezar Stadium, will be credited towards the improvements. The agreement between Rec and Parks and the Deltas is for 5 years.

Kezar Stadium has previously been the home to several professional soccer teams, including the San Francisco Golden Gate Gales in the 1960's, the San Francisco Seals in the 1990's, the California Victory in 2007, and the Bay Area Breeze women's soccer team in 2013. The stadium was originally built in 1925 and seated 60,000 spectators. It was reconstructed as a 10,000 seat stadium in 1990.