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49ers to stay at Candlestick until at least 2014

The 49ers will be sticking around San Francisco until at least 2014 under a tentative lease deal hammered out this week after Mayor Gavin Newsom met with team President Jed York to mend fences, city officials said.

The deal, which still needs the approval of the Recreation and Park Commission and the Board of Supervisors, gives the Niners more flexibility to pull up stakes and move to Santa Clara but also settles a $60 million maintenance claim the team had filed against the city, a precursor to a lawsuit.

The 49ers' current Candlestick Park lease expires after the 2012 season. Renewing the lease would mean signing on for another five years. But the team hopes to move into a proposed stadium in Santa Clara in 2015 and doesn't want to be on the hook to San Francisco for years of rent for a decaying stadium it's not using.

The new agreement let's the team renew its Candlestick lease for five years starting after this season, but it allows the team to opt out of the last year, which would be the 2015 season. The Niners would also have the option of one-year lease extensions every year after that until 2023, when the current lease would have expired.

"It gives us time to remind them that San Francisco loves them," said Newsom, who is pushing through proposals on multiple fronts in his whirlwind final days before being sworn in as lieutenant governor in January. "We want to keep them here as long as we can."

The team will get rent credit for completing $6.5 million in lapsed maintenance work over the next two years that the city was obligated to handle, like repaving the parking lot, flood control work for the lot, replacing seats and fixing leaks in luxury suites. The team will get an additional $4 million to $6 million in either rent reduction or credit on the backend of the deal.

The team pays about $6 million a year to the city in combined rent for the stadium, including a cut of parking and advertising revenue, but had been battling for a decade saying the city has failed to maintain Candlestick as required under the lease. Periodically, the two sides have reached deals where the team pays to do the work and gets credit toward its lease. This latest deal comes as the deadline loomed for the team file a lawsuit.

Lisa Lang, a team vice president, said the Niners are "pleased that our negotiations with the City of San Francisco have resulted in a tentative settlement regarding both our deferred maintenance and our lease extension."

Newsom said the deal helps pave the way for the team to reconsider leaving San Francisco and instead agree to build a new stadium in a redeveloped Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. That proposal has already received voter and city approval.

"It gives us some time now to remind them how great the deal is that San Francisco has put up," Newsom said. "We've got this teed up on a silver platter. ... All they need to do is get building permits."

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