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Sports Business

‘There’s a new energy’: MLS commissioner impressed with recent Houston Dynamo investments



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By **Chandler France** – Reporter, Houston Business Journal
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In light of recent investments into Shell Energy Stadium and a new headquarters, Major League Soccer’s commissioner praised the Houston Dynamo Football Club and owner Ted Segal’s efforts to grow the team.

HDFC hosted an open house on Aug. 24 **for its new headquarters**, located at 413 Bastrop St. in East Downtown, a block north of the club’s stadium. The 26,000-square-foot facility now houses over 100 of the team’s staff – with additional space to add more employees – and features a third-floor event space. MLS Commissioner Don Garber joined HDFC’s top executives for the event.

Garber said he views Houston as one of the most valuable markets for MLS given its diversity and importance to the country overall. He said the league is driven by diversity, making MLS and Houston a natural fit.

“We are the league for a new America, and that new America is right here in Houston,” Garber told the Houston Business Journal. “The energy and the excitement of this neighborhood is perfect for us.”

Garber said that he’s been impressed with the investments Segal has made, which have totaled \$27 million over the past 12 months. He considers Shell Energy Stadium one of the best centrally located venues in all of MLS, so he praised Segal for his vision and commitment to improving it. Recent upgrades to the venue include **new all-mesh seating, an upgraded club space** and **new local restaurant partners**.

“You get the feeling that there’s a new energy here that is about to explode and take on the opportunity,” Garber told the media at the event.

While much of the conversation about the MLS has been centered on international superstar Lionel Messi joining Inter Miami CF, Garber reminded Houstonians that the Dynamo have a global star of their own. Houston **signed Mexican national player** Héctor Herrera in 2022 to contract through the 2024 season with an option for 2025. Herrera is the Mexican National Team captain and played for La Liga’s Atlético de Madrid before coming to MLS.

“I said to Ted when he got signed, ‘Finally, he’s wearing one of our jerseys,’” Garber said. “I don’t want to minimize the importance of having a guy like Herrera in this club.”

Segal told the media that it is gratifying to hear the commissioner’s praise about the investments made in the club. The new headquarters was an important next step for the club so that the staff could work where the team plays, he said. HDFC previously occupied 8,000 square feet of space at the George R. Brown Convention Center downtown.

One of the club’s major strategies for growing its fanbase and becoming more relevant in the Houston area is authenticity, Segal told HBJ. That authenticity includes being an active member of and contributor to the EaDo community, which is why the club chose to relocate its headquarters to the area.

“Part of that authenticity is being a fixture in the neighborhood in which you play and now where we work. I think it’s important to show that we’re partners and collaborators in this neighborhood,” Segal told HBJ. “I’m very proud that our organization is now in the new headquarters here in EaDo in an expanded space that’s befitting of a major league organization and for our ambitions.”

With the Houston Dynamo and Houston Dash seasons still underway, the club is planning more investments into Shell Energy Stadium to be unveiled for the 2024 season, Segal said. HDFC will enhance its field-side seating, replacing the current folding chairs with over 200 padded reclining seats. The club will also be making changes and additions to its concessions offerings.

“Shell Energy Stadium is a work in progress, and our intention is to year over year make improvements to it,” Segal said.