

Half Moon Bay down to two district maps

By Zachary Clark Daily Journal staff

After agreeing to transition from an at-large to a by-district election system, the Half Moon Bay City Council narrowed down the list of potential district maps to two at a meeting last week.

That meeting also entailed the first reading of an ordinance regulating accessory dwelling units, which was unanimously approved by the council.

The new rules for accessory dwelling units, also known as in-law units, are meant to encourage production of affordable housing and are also proposed because the city's existing regulations are at odds with state law.

During the meeting, the council did make several changes to the version of the ordinance approved by the Planning Commission in June.

Councilmembers agreed to not allow ADUs in open space reserve and urban reserve districts or in planned unit development zones.

“The whole purpose of reserving those areas with that zoning is to leave development off those areas in order to not encourage sprawl and to focus attention on in-fill development,” said Councilwoman Debbie Ruddock.

And either the ADU or principal unit on a property must be owner occupied to prevent them from becoming short-term rentals, but a small number of residents who are already using their ADU for short-term rentals will be grandfathered in.

“I'm fine with grandfathering in a small number of those, but I don't want to see short-term rentals in any other ADUs. The whole purpose of building ADUs is to increase affordable housing, it's not just an income producer,”

said Mayor Deborah Penrose.

Half Moon Bay is transitioning to a by-district election system after a Southern California attorney claimed at-large elections discriminate against the city's Latino population and threatened litigation if it did not make the switch. The council decided to create four districts, each represented by one councilmember, while the mayor would be elected at large and serve four-year terms starting in 2020.

During the meeting, six potential maps were presented by demographer Dr. Doug Johnson. He said three maps were submitted by the public and three were created by his firm, National Demographics Corporation.

The council agreed to move forward with two maps known on the city's website as "draft 101" and "draft 106," though that's not to say other maps can't be considered at the next hearing. The council also requested the demographer return with two versions of each of those maps.

Vice Mayor Harvey Rarback said he liked "draft 101" because it's compact and it keeps downtown together in one district.

Penrose also praised that map for being compact and liked that Highway 1 serves as a clear division between districts. She also said she wants Ocean Colony and Canada Cove to be included in the same district because separating the two "feels like gerrymandering."

Ruddock praised "draft 106" in part

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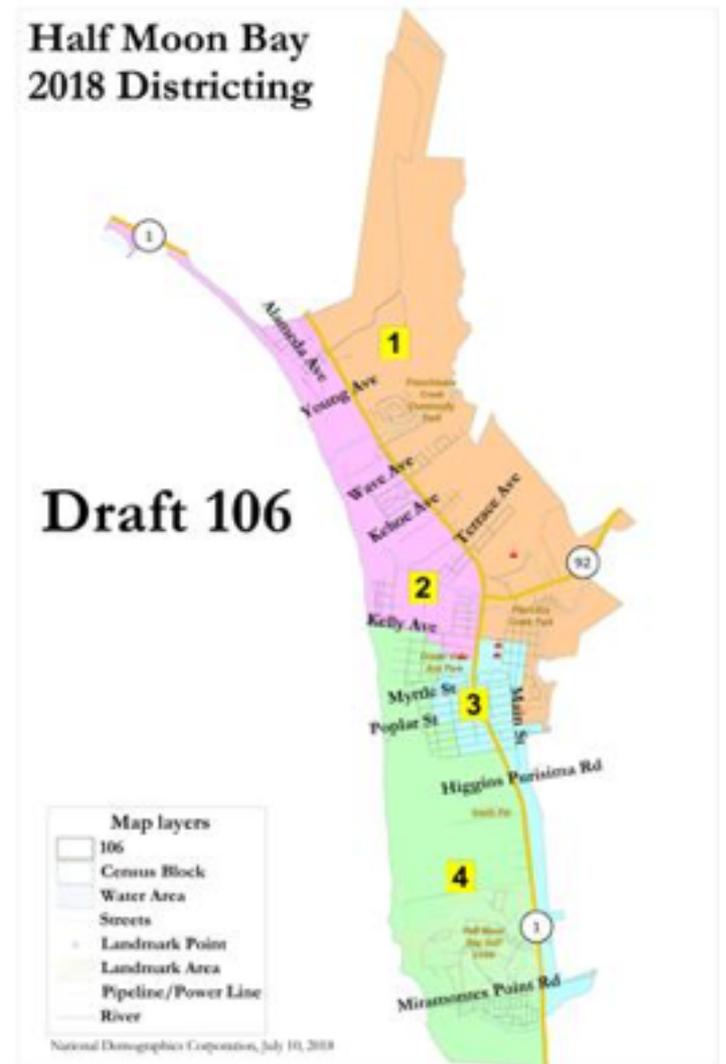
because she said District 3 in that map includes a diverse mix of demographics including a concentration of Latinos and she liked that downtown is represented by two districts.

“In terms of contiguous areas, compactness and diversity, I think 106 meets quite a few tests,” she said, though suggested adjusting the boundary of District 4 along Kelly Avenue.

The final map will be selected during the council’s meeting Aug. 21.

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