

Kena's Response to the RFA for Emergency Storage Containers

3/27/2025 Board Meeting

It is serendipitous that this issue about the storage of emergency supplies has arisen at the same time that the Strategic Planning Committee has completed some of their foundational tasks. There is a profound correlation between their work and the difficult decision we face today about emergency storage. In my view, that decision must be made with respect to the principles and values we share as a community.

Fortuitously, the Strategic Planning committee has provided some guidance that we might wish to consider as we make this decision about emergency storage. They have given me permission to give you a preview of the work they have done thus far and have planned to “roll out” to the community for feedback later this spring.

The initial steps of creating any Strategic Plan involve a self-study where stakeholders identify their shared values, priorities, mission and goals. In our case the Strategic Planning Committee was fortunate to have the data that was collected from the 2021 Vision Survey that took place prior to our reorganization. The committee analyzed the feedback from that survey and they believe it still truly represents the voices of the women in this community.

The data revealed that there are three things that our community believes are most important to us about our life here at DBR. The committee is calling these our Guiding Pillars. They are:

- Community and Mutual Support
- Safety and Security
- Natural Environment and Beauty and Sustainability and Stewardship

The concept of a Strategic Plan is that whenever any decision is made for the community, it will be evaluated with reference to these Pillars. This is to assure that we are responding to the voice of our members and following a roadmap that keeps us faithful to our values, mission and goals in the decisions we make.

With that being said, I will share my thinking, as just one board member, about the issue of emergency storage containers, keeping the Guiding Pillars in the forefront:

Safety and Security are the easiest to address. Planning for emergencies and gathering provisions and accessing places to store them for a time when they may be critically needed, powerfully underscores our values and efforts to create safety and security for the community in the face of a devastating disaster or crisis.

There may be a few people among us who believe that it's every woman for herself, but in general we have chosen to throw our lots together. The plan to store emergency supplies exemplifies our Pillar of Community and Mutual Support.

Having established that the storage of food and emergency supplies upholds the first two pillars, the question for me then becomes in what type of container and where in the park can we store these items with respect to the Pillar of Natural Environment and Beauty and other aspects of Community and Mutual Support.

The RFA we are considering today suggests that the supplies would be best stored in a shipping container parked in close proximity to the Ramada, for easy access in an emergency. I understand that desire for convenience and accessibility but I think that placement of a shipping container or a shed in the most beautiful park-like area of DBR, between the orchard and Radclyffe, would diminish the beauty of that area and possibly make it a less desirable place for the community to gather and recreate.

Our CC&Rs charge the board with caring for our land and protecting the appearance of our property. How DBR looks is not just a nice, aesthetic luxury

- it redounds to the value of our collective financial investments in the park
- It's a source of pride
- It's a place to play, share meals and be entertained together
- For some of us it is a balm in emotional darkness
- For others a literal spiritual sanctuary

I believe that a shipping container parked anywhere in the park would detract from the beauty and appearance of our land, but especially from the view of East Street and the Ramada it would not meet the criteria of protecting the Natural Beauty of the park nor uphold some aspects of the Pillar of Community, if community relies on visually hospitable places on our beautiful land where we can share time with one another outdoors.

I understand the pros and cons of shipping containers vs sheds and I have heard the recommendation that a container in proximity to the Ramada would be best, but I just can't support that.

At this time I would like to recommend that the Board just respond to the issue of a storage place for food and defer a decision about a container for other emergency supplies for later. In my view this would be phase one of a multi-part plan that would include another storage structure and also retrofitting the Ramada to strengthen its stability in the event of an earthquake.

My preferred place to store our emergency food would be in a well-built, insulated shed and I would like to see it placed near the existing safety shed by the laundry parking area because:

- That's a clear area away from trees and a prime spot for solar panels on the roof if we wanted to install them
- There is vehicle access from two directions in order to transport emergency items downhill
- Electricity is available for maintaining an appropriate environment within the shed
- It does not detract from the natural beauty of the living and playing areas in the park
- We are used to the appearance of sheds in our environment so it wouldn't look radically out of place
- There is motion activated lighting in that area at night for security
- I understand that a parking place next to that area near the fence might need to be moved to accommodate a large shed, but there is space there.

I look forward to hearing what the other board members have to say and to working with them to decide on a plan that can be implemented at least for emergency food storage now with a goal to address other preparedness issues in the near future.