



Bogdan Vitas Jr.  
City Manager

**THE CITY OF KEY WEST**  
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**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER**

October 23, 2013

Michael Shields, Chair  
Key West Art in Public Places Board  
1826 Fogarty Ave  
Key West FL 33040

RE: Diana Nyad Monument at Smathers Beach

Dear Michael:

It was a pleasure speaking with you earlier regarding the idea to have the City of Key West formally recognize Diana Nyad's contribution to our community on the world stage. I would like to thank you and the Art in Public Places Board members for your joint interest in creating a permanent monument to be located at Smathers Beach to commemorate long-distance swimmer Diana Nyad's record setting historic swim from Cuba to Key West on September 2, 2013. I appreciate the support of yourself and the Key West Art in Public Place (AIPP) Board.

At the upcoming City Commission meeting on November 6, 2013, under the City Manager's Report, I will recommend that the City hold a nationwide design competition for a new sculpture and appropriate \$5,000.00 as a stipend for the winning artist. Of course, the design competition, commissioning, selection and funding of the new artwork will comport with AIPP Guidelines. I welcome the Board's input and continued support to recognize one of Key West's newest historic figures.

Please feel free to join me at the meeting should you wish to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bogdan Vitas Jr.", written over a printed name and title.

Bogdan Vitas, City Manager  
City of Key West, Florida

C: Mayor and City Commissioners

*Key to the Caribbean - Average yearly temperature 77° F.*

It was moved by Commissioner Rossi and seconded by Commissioner Weekley to approve the agenda as changed. The Mayor asked for objections and seeing none the agenda was approved.

**PROCLAMATIONS:**

National Hospice and Home Health Care Month

Dia de la Tradicion

Florida Keys Community College's Community Day

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week

Smart Ride Day

**PRESENTATIONS:**

City Attorney's Report

Mr. Smith indicated their office continues to receive applications for the new Assistant City Attorney position.

City Manager's Report

Mr. Vitas presented the Key West Ambassador Graduation Class 21.

Mr. Vitas gave the Commission a report about the Major Special Events including financials for the last 12 months. They would continue to monitor events and work with the TDC.

Mr. Vitas presented the idea to recognize Diana Nyad with a monument at Smathers Beach. He stated the Art In Public Places Board would evaluate submissions for eventual Commission approval. The Commission consensus was positive for this recognition but they wanted to see movement on the Bishop Kee statue. Michael Shields, Chairman of the Art In Public Places Board also addressed the Commission regarding both issues.

Mr. Vitas requested a workshop for the site location of a homeless shelter be scheduled. The Commission agreed to December 18, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. for the workshop.

## The Diana Nyad Project

On the morning of August 31, 2013, Diana Nyad swam from Cuba to Key West Florida, a distance of about 110 miles swimming without a shark cage but protected from jellyfish by a silicone mask, a full bodysuit, gloves and booties. She was accompanied by 35 team members, including navigators, managers, boat crew, weather routers, medical personnel, and shark experts. Nyad was also escorted by two paddlers in a kayaks equipped with an electronic shark shield. To keep Nyad swimming in a straight line, her specially designed, slow-moving catamaran support boat deployed a 10-foot (3.0 m) streamer: a long pole keeps the streamer several yards away from the boat, and the streamer is designed to remain about 5 feet underwater, so that Nyad can swim above it, much like following a lane line in a swimming pool. At night, the white streamer was replaced by a string of red LED lights. At approximately 1:55 pm EDT on September 2, 2013, Nyad reached Smathers beach in Key West, about 53 hours after she began her journey.

This was Diana Nyad's fifth attempt at the historic swim. Previous attempts at the swim were thwarted by a variety of problems.

"So many times I conjured the Florida beach, the palm trees, to get me through the hundreds of long, grueling training swims. Four times, in the previous attempts at the crossing from Cuba to Florida---be it otherworldly Box Jellyfish stings or a screeching Easterly Gulf Stream or roiling eddies spinning our boats' compasses in full circles or sustained sudden summer storms with life-threatening lightning and 45-mph winds---we were forced to abandon the beautiful Dream.... *Diana Nyad*

The City of Key West would like to memorialize this historic swim by creating a monument honoring Diana Nyad which will be placed in a prominent place in the city of Key West. In addition the city will place a plaque at Smathers Beach commemorating her swim.



## DIANA NYAD

Nyad was born in New York City on August 22, 1949, to stockbroker William L. Sneed Jr. and his wife Lucy Winslow Curtis (1925-2007). The Sneeds divorced in 1952, after which Lucy Sneed married Aristotle Z. Nyad, a Greek-Egyptian land developer, who adopted Diana and the family moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where she began swimming seriously in seventh grade. She attended Pine Crest School, swimming under the tutelage of Olympian and Hall of Fame coach Jack Nelson. She won three Florida state high school championships in the backstroke at 100 and 200 yards. She dreamed of swimming in the 1968 Summer Olympics, but in 1966 she spent three months in bed with endocarditis, an infection of the heart, and when she began swimming again she had lost speed.

Nyad graduated from Lake Forest College in Illinois with a degree in English and French. She played tennis for the *Foresters* and resumed swimming, concentrating on distance events. After graduating from college, she trained with Buck Dawson, director of the International Swimming Hall of Fame in Florida, who introduced her to marathon swimming.

Nyad has authored three books, *Other Shores* (Random House: September 1978) about her life and distance swimming, *Basic Training for Women* (Harmony Books: 1981), and in 1999 she wrote a biography of an NFL wide-receiver *Boss of Me: The Keyshawn Johnson Story*. She has also written for *The New York Times*, *Newsweek* magazine, and numerous other publications.

Nyad hosted the public radio program "The Savvy Traveler." She was a long-time weekly contributor to National Public Radio's afternoon news show *All Things Considered*. She was also a regular contributor to the CBS News television show *Sunday Morning*.

Nyad was inducted into the United States National Women's Sports Hall of Fame in 1986. She is also an International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame Honoree (1978) and an ISHOF Al Schoenfield Media Award recipient (2002). She is a Hall of Famer at both her college, Lake Forest College in Illinois and at her high school, Pine Crest School in Fort Lauderdale.

An independently produced documentary film, *The Other Shore*, was released in early 2013, some months before Nyad's first successful swim from Cuba to Florida.

### Distance Swimming Records

- **1974:** In June 1974, Nyad set a women's record of 8 hours, 11 minutes in the 22-mile (35 km) Bay of Naples race.
- **1975:** At age 26, Nyad made national headlines by swimming 28 miles (45 km) around the island of Manhattan (New York City) in just under 8 hours (7 hours 57 minutes.)
- **1978:** At age 28 she first attempted to swim from Havana, Cuba to Key West, one year after the [Kennedy-era travel restrictions](#) were lifted. Diving into the ocean at 2PM on Sunday August 13 from Ortegosa Beach (50 miles (80 km) west of Havana), she swam inside a 20 × 40-foot (6 × 12

m) steel shark cage for nearly 42 hours, before team doctors removed her during the 7 o'clock hour on the morning of Tuesday August 15 due to strong Westerly winds and 8-foot (2.4 m) swells that were slamming her against the cage and pushing her off-course towards Texas. She had covered about 76 miles (122 km), but not in a straight line.

- **1979:** In what was to be her last "competitive" swim on her 30th birthday (August 21–22, 1979), she set a world record for distance swimming (both men and women) over open water by swimming 102.5 miles (164 km) from North Bimini Island, Bahamas, to Juno Beach, Florida (without the use of protective shark cage). Thanks to favorable winds and a following sea she averaged 3.7 miles per hour (6.0 km/h) and completed the swim in 27 and one-half hours.
- **2013:** At 64 years old, Diana Nyad became the first person to swim without a shark cage from Cuba to the United States. The 103 mile swim took Nyad 53 hours. It was her fifth attempt.

More information about Diana Nyad can be found on her website [www.diananyad.com](http://www.diananyad.com)



## **DIANA NYAD PROJECT**

The Diana Nyad Project will honor marathon swimmer Diana Nyad on her historic achievement of swimming 103 miles from Havana, Cuba to Key West, Florida. Nyad left Cuba on August 31, 2013 and arrived in Key West 53 hours later on September 2, 2013. Nyad was accompanied by a 35 member support team, five boats, and three kayaks. When she arrived in Key West she was greeted by throngs of residents and visitors and captured by local and international media outlets. The project will be responsible for designing, fundraising and installing plaques, a monument, and a celebration to honor this historic achievement.

### **Project Co-Chairs**

Michael Shields, Chair, Key West Art in Public Places Board, Key West, Florida

Dr. Lynette Long, President, Equal Visibility Everywhere, Miami, Florida

### **Diana Nyad Project Jury**

The task of the project jury will be to select the sculptor for a sculpture of Diana Nyad and to provide input regarding the design of the monument

### **Members of the Jury**

Michael Shields, Chair, Key West Art in Public Places Board, [javastudios@gmail.com](mailto:javastudios@gmail.com) 305-741-7403

Lynette Long, President, Equal Visibility Everywhere, [Drlynettelong@aol.com](mailto:Drlynettelong@aol.com) 301-325-6976

Kevin Bond, City Planner, City of Key West, [kbond@keywestcity.com](mailto:kbond@keywestcity.com), 305-809-3725

Heather Carruthers, Board of County Commissioners, [boccdis3@monroecounty-fl.gov](mailto:boccdis3@monroecounty-fl.gov), 305- 292-3430

Representative Joe Garcia, U.S. House of Representatives, 305-292-4485

Adam Russell, Sculpture Key West, [info@keywestpottery.com](mailto:info@keywestpottery.com) 305-900-8303

Emily Sorkin, President, Sculpture Key West, [emsorki@yahoo.com](mailto:emsorki@yahoo.com), 646-942-3790

David Wolkowsky, Real Estate Developer and Art Collector -

A Major Miami Art Museum Curator – To Be Determined

### Sites for Diana Nyad Monument

On February 27, 2014, Project Co-Chairs, Lynette Long and Michael Shields toured Key West looking for a possible site for the placement of the Diana Nyad Monument. Below is a list of eight sites in Key West that were visited and evaluated. The sites are listed in alphabetical order. The pros and cons of each are listed.

- Conch Harbor at the end of Grinnell Street, adjacent to Ferry  
Pros – It is on the Harbor. It would get traffic from the ferry terminal.  
Cons – It is off the beaten path. Location is small and cramped. It is too small for landscaping.
- Historic Seaport – Corner of Greene and Elizabeth Streets – To the Right of the Norberg Thompson Memorial  
Pros – High traffic area. Nice landscaping possible. It is next to another memorial honoring a historic figure. It is on the waterfront.  
Cons – Space is small and crowded.
- Mary and John Spotswood Waterfront Park at Seminole and Alberta Streets  
Pros – A beautifully landscaped park on the water in historic Key West. The park has an empty place in the center that would be perfectly ideal for a monument. Large enough to accommodate whatever the artists create.  
Cons – None
- Mallory Square  
Pros - High traffic area. Lots of pedestrian traffic. Near other statues.  
Cons - There are a lot of events in the square so there might not be enough room for the statue, and even if there is it would not be a central location on the square.
- Smathers Beach  
Pros – This is the actual beach where Diana Nyad came ashore in her historic swim.  
Cons – It is impossible to mount a sculpture here that will not be destroyed in the first big storm that hits Key West. Not a highly trafficked area.
- Truman Waterfront  
Pros – A beautiful new park. Statue could be incorporated in design of park and be in a great location. Statue could be used to drive traffic to park. Size and design of statue would be unrestricted. Statue could be surrounded by appropriate landscaping.  
Cons – Unknown timeline. Need to develop strategic Art Plan for Park that is integrative.

- White Street Pier

Pros – Fantastic water views on all sides. The site gets a moderate amount of traffic. You can see Smathers Beach where Diana Nyad came ashore.

Cons - The statue would be dwarfed by the large expanse at the end of the pier.

Impossible to landscape around the statue. Restricted access due to the long walk to the end of the pier. Pier is staging area for firework displays and the monument may be subject to damage.

- White Street Pier – Rest Beach - Adjacent to AIDS Memorial

Pros – Near other memorials. You can park and walk to the statue. Moderate traffic.

Cons - There is no other statuary near the site. The other two memorials at the site, the AIDS Memorial and the African American Graveyard both deal with death.

Based on our initial research our recommendations for the location of the Diana Nyad monument are:

1. Mary and John Spotswood Waterfront Park
2. Elizabeth and Greene Streets Historic Seaport
3. Mallory Square

The Mary and John Spotswood Waterfront Park is our strong first choice. The park is large enough to incorporate a beautiful memorial and is on the water. The park is already landscaped and will have increased traffic when the Diana Nyad Monument is erected. It will become a destination in Key West.

Because it is impossible to place a monument at Smathers Beach, the project chairs recommend that a plaque be placed at Smathers Beach which recognizes that on this spot on September 2, 2013, Diane Nyad emerged from her historic 103 mile swim from Cuba to Key West, Florida. The exact wording of the text to be written on the plaque will be determined later.