

City of Newport
Public Sculpture Commission
December 31, 2025
Edward King House
35 King Street, Newport, RI 02840
Annual Report

In 2025 the Public Sculpture Commission met on a monthly basis with the exception of August. Meetings took place January 10, February 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, July 11, September 5, October 10, November 7, and December 5.

Scott Wheeler, the City's Superintendent of Parks, Grounds and Forestry served as special advisor.

Roll calls:

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| Nancy W. Grinnell | Present: Jan. 10, Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, July 11, Sept. 5, Oct. 10, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 |
| Paul Miller | Present: April 4, May 2, June 6, July 11, Sept. 5, Oct. 10, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 Absent: Jan. 10, Feb. 7, March 7 |
| Ronald J. Onorato | Present: Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, July 11, Sept. 5, Oct. 10 Absent: Jan. 10, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 |
| Federico Santi | Present: Jan. 10, Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, July 11, Sept. 5, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 Absent: Oct. 10 |
| John Shehan | Present: Jan. 10, Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, July 11, Sept. 5, Oct. 10, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 |
| Paul Szapary | Present: Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, July 11, Sept. 5, Oct. 10, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 Absent: Jan. 10 |
| Harle Tinney | Present: Jan. 10, Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, Sept. 5, Oct. 10, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 Absent: July 11 |
| Scott Wheeler | Present: Feb. 7, March 7, May 2, June 6, July 11, Oct. 10, Nov. 7 Absent: Jan. 10, Sept. 5, Dec. 5 |

Major accomplishments:

The Captain John Waters Memorial bronze relief was re-installed in Newport's City Hall. This public sculpture memorializing Newport's former mayor was originally installed in 1900 and had been in basement storage for decades. The Elks, who originally presented the memorial to the City funded the lighting. A brochure describing the sculpture was completed and is available to

the public. There followed an article in *Newport This Week* as well as a photo with previous mayors.

In January the PSC submitted a Resolution to City Council with the support of Councilors David Carlin and Xay Khamsyvoravong. This related to the proposed relocation of the Vanderbilt Memorial Fountain from Broadway to a Bellevue Avenue location where it could be properly conserved and maintained as a working fountain. At the January 22 City Council meeting, Federico Santi, supported by other PSC members, made a presentation on the advantages of the Resolution. Members of Newport's Off Broadway Neighborhood Association spoke in opposition. Consequently, at its February meeting the PSC withdrew its Resolution, with a motion made by Paul Szapary, seconded by Ronald Onorato and approved with a unanimous vote. OBNA member Jack McVickers attended the February and March PSC meetings and announced that Gretchen Woodard would be the OBNA liaison to our commission. Another later guest, Leppie McCarthy reported that OBNA wishes to be helpful.

PSC member Ronald Onorato approached three certified AIC conservators with regard to an assessment of the twelve public sculptures under our purview. Francis Miller of Conserve Art, Hamden, CT, with a projected cost of \$9,500, was selected, with a motion by John Shehan, seconded by Harle Tinney and approved unanimously. The PSC is in receipt of Miller's detailed proposal.

Funding initiatives for this project as well as funding for the Vanderbilt Memorial were a continued focus of the PSC. City grants officer Peter Bramante attended the September meeting and suggested submitting a Resolution to City Council to authorize seeking a legislative grant for Francis Miller's work. Federico Santi approached Councillor Xay Khamsyvoravong about the city's contribution and was told they would contribute \$2,500. Paul Szapary spearheaded efforts to raise funds towards the Vanderbilt Memorial restoration. He approached officials at Coaching Weekend and will continue to follow up with this group. Occasional guest to meetings, Gigi Orchard, has also been working on funding issues for the Vanderbilt Memorial.

Nominations for 2026 officers were made. Paul Szapary agreed to be Chair, beginning in February 2026. Federico Santi will be Vice-Chair and John Shehan will be Treasurer. Nancy Grinnell will continue as Secretary.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Whipple Grinnell, Secretary