

Museum merits complete support

To the Editor:

I am a resident of Bristol and have never met Laurence and Judy Cutler, nor have I ever been to Vernon Court. Yet, I admire and fully support their efforts to found a significant art museum of such national importance in Newport. I hope that they will persevere in their efforts and not be denied the opportunity to share their art collection with the world.

As an outside observer of the Vernon Court project, I have taken a deep interest in the proceedings involved. I am astonished that there is any opposition to the generosity of the Cutlers in wanting to share their collection for the enjoyment and education of the general public. The proceedings involved have been anything but smooth or friendly for the Cutlers.

The very people, a scant few neighbors who have opposed them, appear to be acting selfishly and in a misguided manner. As I understand, the Cutlers have had an enormous amount of support

from most neighbors, and from important members of the arts community including: J. Carter Brown, the director emeritus of the National Gallery; Roger Mandle, the president of the Rhode Island School of Design; and Randy Rosenbaum, director of the state's arts council. Apparently Paul Gagne, until recently a Zoning Board member, has succeeded in stopping the project thus far. Mr. Gagne also recently was not reappointed to the board. Ronald Dick, a former council member, has come to the defense of Gagne in recent letters, for not being reappointed because he is one of the scant few neighbors who are opposed to Vernon Court. It is no surprise as to why Dick is upset that Gagne no longer may vote on the Vernon Court project. One may find it perplexing to read of Dick's complaints of political maneuvering in Gagne not being reappointed as Dick himself appears to have his own political agenda.

I am of the belief that art and its public display should be above and beyond politics simply be-

cause it is for everyone to choose to view or not. Newport and Rhode Island, as well as the Northeast, have a rare opportunity to be the recipients of the Cutler's generously sharing their collection with us.

Laurence and Judy Cutler have chosen Newport as the home for this important collection, in spite of being courted by many communities, including New York City. Let us as a Rhode Island community act gratefully by supporting and embracing the Cutlers' gift to us. We should make our appreciation known in an overwhelming demonstration of letters to the Zoning Board in Newport at the next soon-to-be hearing on Vernon Court.

Let us not be swayed or discouraged by the politics or actions of a misguided few. Please join with me in welcoming the Cutlers and their world class art collection to Newport.

Stephan Brigidi
Bristol