

Noank Luminaria Report to NFD Annual Meeting May 21, 2024

As I understand it, Noank Luminaria was started by Dave Blacker and his family. After a few years, Priscilla Anson volunteered to take it over, and she and Kevin Barry expanded it to what it is today. They mapped all 27 of the display zones, and counted the number of luminaria needed for each one. The mapping included a policy not to do one-way streets to avoid traffic jams on them. They also recruited the volunteers for the construction and display phases.

After a couple of years they recruited Robin and I to help – and then they moved out of town! We've been assisted in organizing Luminaria by Bob Butler in the early days, and more recently by Blake Powell and Paul Bates. Last year Rose Powell and her book club mates, Beth Steele, Diane Ferguson, EveAnne Stouch, and Lisa Steere volunteered to get involved in the organization, and are phasing in over the next few years as Robin and I will step back – so Luminaria will be in good hands for the foreseeable future!

I have 69 names on my email list to recruit volunteers, and 30-40 folks show up for construction day – split between the sand crew that puts sand in the quart containers and the assembly crew that puts candles in the containers, and boxes the luminaria for distribution to the 27 families and neighbors that display the luminaria on Christmas Eve.

The funding for the supplies – candles, quart containers, bags, boxes and lighters is provided by local businesses – Abbotts & Costellos, Custom Marine Canvas, Noank Service Station, Noank Shipyard, Noank Village Boatyard, Spencer & Lynn, and Spicer's Marina. Fortunately the new owner of the Shipyard and Spicer's has continued their generous support. The Noank Baptist Church helps with the loan of tables for construction day and the Noank Historical Society hosts construction day at the Latham Chester Store and provides year round storage space for supplies. Supplies for a typical year cost \$500-600, but jumps every third year when we buy three years worth of candles at a cost of about \$1,400 (a three year purchase saves \$210 in shipping). We fundraise the \$3,000 cost for three years in level amounts of about \$1,000 each year to keep it simple.

As Priscilla used to say on her posters – It Takes A Village, and we are lucky to have such a great one of volunteers and donors to make the magic happen every Christmas Eve!