

Rail trail committee defends letter to editor

To the editor:

Topsfield selectmen have been more than generous in the time given to the Coalition for Neighborhood Information to discuss rail trail issues at the selectmen's meetings. There have been three marathon sessions (July 7 Oct. 29 and Feb. 4), which lasted about 90 minutes each. Generally speaking the same comments and concerns have been repeated in each of those sessions. Most often heard is that they do not know what is going on with the rail trail.

In contrast, the Rail Trail Committee was given 20 minutes on Oct. 9 to respond to the CNI's comments. Although most all of their concerns have been shown to be either inaccurate or overstated, the CNI keeps on repeating them. Rather than taking the selectmen's time to respond, the Rail Trail Committee decided to write a response as a letter to the editors of the local papers in December. That response can be found on the discussion page of the Rail Trail Committee Web site at www.TopsfieldTrails.Org

At the Feb. 4 selectmen's meeting Chairman John McArdle requested that the CNI get answers from the Rail Trail Committee directly rather than taking the time of the selectmen at their weekly meetings. Representative of the CNI have previously been to our rail trail meetings but have not asked many of the questions

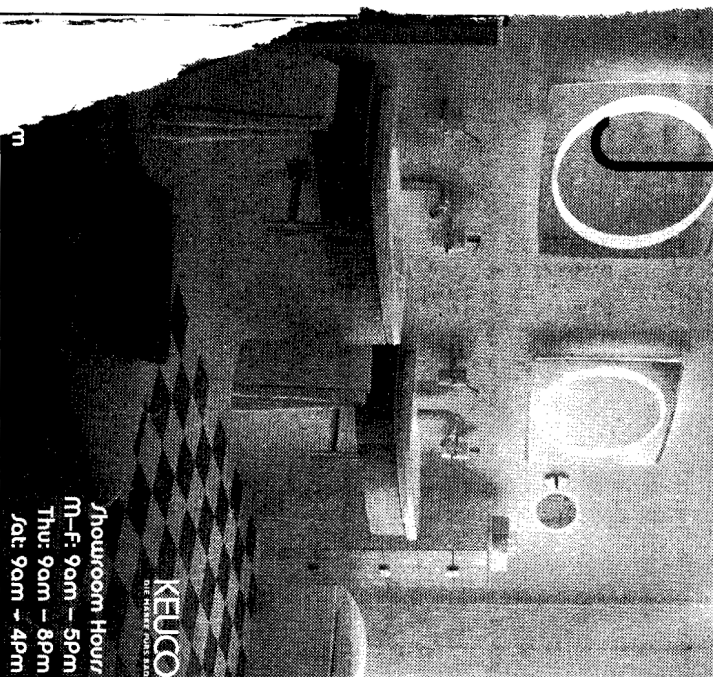
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Letters to the Editor

since the committee was attended only five of our meetings. At those meetings we have gone out of our way allowing interruptions and continuing the meetings Open Forum at the town as long as there have been questions. The meetings were generally

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courteous and each time the CNI thanked us and said they were much better informed.

At our last committee meeting, on Jan. 21, we discussed the design bid specification for Phase 1A of the trail. At the meeting two professional engineers were present and the CNI asked several questions of them yet they then stated at the Feb. 4 selectmen's meeting they did not know what was going on with the bid design for Phase 1A!

A common theme for the CNI's statements is that the residents of Topsfield do not know anything about the rail trail, which we call the TLC (Topsfield Linear Common). The Rail Trail Committee has had numerous activities to provide public information about the rail trail. Please visit the discussion page on our Web site for a list of those activities. Also at our Web site (www.TopsfieldTrail.Org) you will find a link to more than 50 newspaper articles that are related to the Topsfield Linear Common as well as minutes from of all our meetings. Our committee meetings are posted on the public access TV channel and in Town Hall. All are welcome. If you have questions or comments please e-mail the committee at RailTrail@Topsfield-Ma.gov.

Joe Geller
Chairman

Topsfield Rail Trail Committee

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