

Club Notes: Danvers Bi-peds learn about railroad history

By Ingrid Barry/club notes

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DANVERS - When the Danvers Bi-Peds held their annual meeting at the Carriage House at Endicott Park on Monday, May 11, a room full of interested Danvers citizens listened intently as Alden Goodnow told of the history of rail service in Danvers.

With the advent of train service, towns no longer had to be as self-sufficient. Freight trains carried goods in and out of Danvers. Passenger service was plentiful, and getting from place to place seemed fast compared to what can happen during periods of traffic congestion on the roadways today.

Goodnow read from old train schedules, including a menu from a through-train, which everyone thought sounded delicious and very reasonable. Photos of the nine stations that dotted the Danvers landscape in the late 1800s to early 1900s, including the one remaining station, were passed out. As Americans fell in love with automobiles and trucks, ridership and freight service declined and one by one, the trains stopped running.

What Danvers is left with today is miles of unused rail beds. Joe Geller, chairman of the Topsfield Rail Trail Committee, shared his experiences with the group on how to turn them into what in Topsfield is being called the Topsfield Linear Common (TLC for short). From clearing the area through the design phase to actually getting the surface put down on a small portion of Topsfield rail bed has taken perseverance, patience, and time. Geller offered to share what he has learned along the way with Danvers in the hopes that the two towns will some day meet on a completed trail joined through Wenham.