'Ghost Train' Tour Satisfies Riders, Surprises Other Officials

By DOUG FLETCHER and JIM QUIRK

The time schedule said the train would stop in Fitchburg at 10:30 a.m. But the man on the end of the telephone said the train was late and the train would be an hour late. In fact, the schedule was changed so the train was due at Depot Square about 11:30 a.m.

At 12:10 p.m., the passenger special rolled to a stop. There were plenty of conductors on board, probably six or seven for the five cars. But none of the conductors looked at their fabled, accurate, pocket watches. They already knew it was late.

But who cared? The train was like a ghost train.

Few even knew it was coming, outside of a handful of Gardner city officials and a Rhode Island mayor who didn't know about it. Neither did the city planner's fellow who's intensely interested in various modes of transportation.

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Director Clarence Daniels did know about it. He said the Chamber's railway consultants were impressed by the information on train routes.

Gardner Mayor Stephen J. Erickson did know about it. And so did the Gardner City Council president. Ditto for Gardner's freight consultant, who's been offered the chance to ride on a Boston and Maine passenger tour and made the trip from Fitchburg to Mechanicsville, N.Y.

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