

## Minutes of HO Committee Planning Meeting – February 13, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Ken Howard.

Those in attendance included Wayne Aiken, Brock Bowden, Richard Calfee, Bernie Dawson, Pete Donofrio, Sam Ely, Jake Forbes, Randy Foulke, Tom Garren, Ken Howard, Mike Johns, Clif Kelly, Ted Kunstling, George Lasley, Richard Nyce, Ethan Quiram, Peter Ring, Tom Tieman and Bob Witwer.

Today's meeting is the beginning of the process outlined in the meeting of December 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Objectives:** There are two primary objectives for this meeting:

- 1) Schedule the first working days to begin the tasks outlined in December that will allow construction of the new layout extension in the least disruptive manner.
- 2) Advance the planning and decision-making process of what we want to see in the new additions to the HO layout.

**Work to be Scheduled:** In addition to the inventories completed of the layout modules, rolling stock, and materials on hand for construction, the Club has received a major donation of modules and materials that may be useful in: 1) construction of the new layout, 2) construction of member's personal layouts, 3) construction of one or more Club layouts (travelling /sale/ donation), or 4) salvage for sale of materials at the Spring Show. The modules are currently stored at Bob Witwer's storage shed in Clayton.

**Item 1** - Schedule one or more sessions to give members a chance to examine the modules for possible retention by the Club or sale to members. Volunteers will be needed when we reach that stage of the process.

One item from the donation that should be incorporated into the HO layout is a staging yard. We have received three eight x one foot modules with four tracks. These fit together to form a twenty-four-foot staging yard. The Track Planning subcommittee needs to determine how best to use these modules.

After a good discussion it was determined that the use of these modules should be prioritized as follows:

- 1) Use in the HO layout expansion
- 2) Use as part of the proposed traveling HO layout
- 3) Sell modules to members

- 4) Take remainder to the Spring show for sale
- 5) Scrap what is left over.

Bob offered up two times available for viewing the modules. Thursday February 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm and Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 1:00 pm. It was further decided to have anyone who would like to see the modules at these times contact Bob Witwer. He will give them directions to the storage location and information required for access. We need to have this storage unit emptied by the end of March; therefore, it is desired to have the modules dealt with by the middle of March.

**Item 2** - A workday is required to move the N scale layout and to relocate the air conditioner to a shelf mount in the corner. The HO layout also needs to move about one foot toward the entry door.

- 1) Randy Foulke will work with Mike Keelean to obtain a suitable shelf and mounting brackets to raise the AC unit.
- 2) The N scale layout will be moved to its new location on Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9:45 am.
- 3) We need six to eight people to facilitate the move of the N scale layout.

**Item 3** – One or more workdays and a project coordinator/s are required for work needed on the existing HO layout. A number of things need to be decided and/or accomplished:

- 1) Tom Garren has volunteered to review the hardware and software of the laptop under the HO layout. He will make updates as needed and report status back to Ken Howard.
- 2) Tom Tieman and Richard Calfee have volunteered to address moving the legs on the corner units so that they do not obstruct access. This should be completed by the end of March.
- 3) Ken Howard has volunteered to lead the review of the wiring needs with the help of John Wallis. Ken will also work with John to investigate the block system (how it works, do we want to keep or modify, does it play a role in new construction, etc.).
- 4) Another item of concern is how to report track problems so they can be fixed. Tom Tieman suggested a clipboard could be used to record problems. Ethan Quiram volunteered to create a spreadsheet to be used for reporting track problems. Ethan and Richard Calfee will be the contact persons for reporting problems. Ken Howard will put a notebook together with descriptions of each module to aid in identifying the exact location of problems

- 5) Another long discussion occurred around the topic of powered or manual switches. It was suggested to at least power the hard-to-reach switches and maybe those on the mainline. This will be settled later.

**Item 4** – A number of members have submitted ideas on potential track plans and components of the expansion. Today we should try to agree on a basic plan for the new addition – we don't have to finish the plan today, but I hope that there will be a consensus from the members present that we can hand to the Track Planning subcommittee for them to use in development of an initial detailed plan. I hope the track planners will also look at the inventory of available supplies and construct a master list of materials that are available or must be purchased.

Unresolved items include:

- 1) the track plan itself and where the new layout will connect to the old,
- 2) a work schedule for construction including removal of existing modules,
- 3) a design that allows access to the new modules for construction, operations, and addition of scenery, industries, etc.

Bob Witwer led a discussion on the track plan. Several members voiced their ideas for making the improvements to the layout. He stated that we are planning to model from Morehead City to West Virginia. This will give a reason for both the mountains with their coal mines and a seaport for loading ships. It also extends the original story of the railroad. This was a conceptual presentation.

As mentioned earlier, we intend to utilize some of the modules from the Greenville donation to create a staging yard. We are also planning to have a wye on the extension. Brock Bowden reminded to keep the new plan simple. Ken Howard pointed out that we want at least two levels of track on the finished layout. Also, we want to maintain the existing layout until such time as we are ready to cut in the extension. This will cause the least disruption to the layout.

Lowering the existing layout was also discussed. After several viewpoints were voiced, it was decided that we will not try to lower the layout. It was also agreed that we must have better access to the center and other areas that cannot be reached from the outside of the layout. The Track Planning subcommittee was charged with identifying how to achieve this access as part of the track plan.

George Lasley mentioned that it might make sense to totally rewire the layout. Even though this will entail quite a bit of work it could pay dividends down the road.

It was determined that Ethan Quiram has experience connecting and disconnecting the modules. His help will be needed when we determine which modules will be removed. Ken

Howard stated that the two modules being removed from the layout could be used in a travelling layout.

Additional discussion indicated that the existing turntable was expendable if the Track Committee felt its removal would facilitate connection of the expansion to the existing layout.

**Item 5** - Schedule the next meeting of each working group and the next meeting of the entire committee to assess progress and make further plans.

The next meeting of the HO committee will be on March 20<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm at the Clubhouse.

Jake Forbes has volunteered to participate on the Track Planning subcommittee.

Mike Johns reminded everyone to support the plan going forward once the decisions are made. This should result in a better HO layout for the entire Club.

Bob Witwer will schedule the next meeting for the Track Planning subcommittee. The Track Planning subcommittee needs to create a proposed track plan to serve as a strawman for future discussions. Ultimately, there needs to be a final track plan taken to the Board for approval with an estimate of costs.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:26 pm.