

Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club

Minutes of the HO Committee Meeting of March 16, 2025

1. Call Meeting to Order

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

2. Roll Call of Members in Attendance

Members who attended were Wayne Aiken, Ely Carter-Williamson, Bernie Dawson, Peter Donofrio, Dan Egy, Randy Foulke, Tom Garren, Alex Griswold, Mike Hinman, Ken Howard, Paul Lebedzinski, Don McPherson, Greg Rehe, Alec Urban, and Bob Witwer.

3. Old Business Problem Updates

Ken Howard related several problems we are currently encountering which include:

- a. Broken throttles. There have recently been two throttles broken and thrown back in the box in the Shop. Members are encouraged to look out for parts, such as the main knob, from these throttles.
- b. Tom Garren suggested that we require members to provide their own throttles. Ken stated that it is a Board issue. Greg Rehe suggested that we have a recommendation from the HO committee to the Board. The consensus was to not provide throttles to members.
- c. Ken Howard reminded everyone that we do make throttles available for visitors. He also noted that a throttle dedicated to the N scale layout often wanders to the HO layout. Ken suggested that the Digitrax throttles not be left out in the Shop but should be stored out of sight.
- d. Rerailers. Ken Howard reported that rerailers are provided on hooks located along side of the staging tracks. Somehow these devices wander away and sometimes are not even left on the layout. One suggestion is to install a tether to keep the rerailers located along the storage tracks.
- e. Building shutdown. Ken Howard reported that twice in the last two weeks the building has not been closed down properly. We have found doors unlocked and power strips left on. If you are the last person out, please follow the closing checklist.

4. Old Business Status Updates

Ken Howard reviewed the status of several ongoing projects:

- a. The switch panel for the lumber camp is not yet built per Bob Witwer. However, the switches and switch motors have been installed per Paul Lebedzinski.
- b. Per Ken, the tunnel portals have been printed but have not yet been delivered to the Clubhouse.

c. Inventories

The group was reminded that inventories with values are needed for insurance purposes. Ken Howard gave a preliminary inventory of HO equipment to Bob Witwer. An inventory and valuation of the layout modules and electronic equipment will also be needed.

Bernie Dawson stated that he along with Randy Foulke and John Wallis are working an inventory of the N scale layout.

d. Engine Repair

Ken Howard reported that Jim Smith is repairing two Club locomotives.

e. Instagram

An Instagram account for the HO group has been discussed. Ken asked Alec Urban about this. For now it is on hold. Alec thinks using this technology will attract more young members. Alec will follow up with Adam Servas for more details.

f. NRV Hoppers

Randy Foulke reported that he is planning on contacting Accu rail to obtain quotes on creating NRV three-bay hopper cars.

g. Recent Work Sessions

Ken Howard reported that the three recent work sessions to clean up and organize materials under the HO layout have been successful. You can now see from one end of the layout to the other if you peek underneath.

The cabinet with glass shelves is now stored in the member's storage room and is available for sale.

h. Engine Service Area

Randy Foulke has talked to Collin Martinko about the design for the engine servicing facility. Collin is working on the design, but it is not yet complete.

i. Track Plan

Alec Urban stated that he has created a track plan of how the layout exists today. This plan was done manually. This comment triggered a discussion about obtaining a set of track designing software. Several names were mentioned. Bob Witwer stated that he has Any Rail. Someone else mentioned Any Rail. We need someone to translate the existing layout into a CAD program. Alex Griswold suggested that when we purchase the software it should be in the Club name rather than the name of an individual.

Peter Donofrio inquired about a plan change suggestion made last month by Collin Martinko. Ken Howard stated that it is on hold until we can have further discussions.

5. New Business

a. Personal Equipment

Ken Howard made everyone aware that members that store their equipment on the members' only shelves should select a two color code or other suitable identification with which to mark their cars. The sheet for signing up for a color code is available near the shelves.

b. Track Standards

Bob Witwer distributed a draft version of track standards for the HO layout. He asked that comments be returned to him by March 23rd. He also stated that Chuck Larnerd is working on wiring standards.

c. Groups.io

Ken Howard discussed the creation of a Groups.io page for the HO group and another for the N scale group. The details of this tool are still to be worked out. Thanks to Milo Poulin for creating the groups. More on this topic later.

d. Backdrop for Module 9

Randy Foulke showed a sample of a backdrop made by affixing a picture of a building to gator foam. This concept is proposed for a backdrop on Module 9. Randy will continue to investigate this option and get back to the Board and the group on costs.

e. Open House

Ken Howard reminded everyone that we have an Open House scheduled for Saturday, April 5th. As usual the event will run from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. Members are requested to run only Club equipment for the Open House. Randy Foulke will act as Dispatcher for the HO layout at the event.

f. Scenery

Bob Witwer requested small volunteers to climb on the layout and finish the scenery on the mountain around the mine and the lumber camp. A work session is scheduled on Saturday March 22 starting at 1:00 pm to accomplish this task.

Paul Lebiezinski has completed one box of trees for Mount Witwer. A second box will be needed. Ken Howard will acquire the second box from Nick's if it is still available.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 pm.