

Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club

Minutes of the HO Committee Meeting of April 20, 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 Ely Carter-Williamson, Bernie Dawson, Dan Egy, Tom Garren, Mike Hinman, Ken Howard, Chuck Larnerd, Paul Lebiezinski, Don McPherson, Phil Michaud, Greg Rehe, and John Spach.

3. Track Standards Subcommittee

Chuck Larnerd was named the chairman of the Track Standards subcommittee. This will give some relief to Bob Witwer whose time is committed as Show Chairman. The written standards are in progress.

4. New Inventory Items

Ken Howard announced several locomotives that have recently been added to the Club inventory. Thanks to John Spach for adding decoders to these engines to make them DCC equipped. The engines include a Southern mountain (4-8-2), a Norfolk Southern GE E44, and several others.

The Heinz pickle car that was lost has been located and upgraded with Kadee couplers and metal wheelsets. We also have two other pickle cars added to the fleet. Three more cars were offered as possible additions to the fleet. These included two side-dump gondolas and an Athearn crane. The group agreed to add these cars to inventory.

Ken Howard reported that all HO inventories needed for insurance and financial purposes have been completed and submitted to the Treasurer.

5. Plexiglas Yes or No

A discussion was held about the addition of Plexiglas to the HO layout to protect the scenery and equipment. Many opinions were offered ranging from people not liking Plexiglas at all to some liking the example that was installed prior to Open House. The bulk of the discussion revolved around the height of the Plexiglas and the ability to reach the hand throw switches.

Phil Michaud noted that the Plexiglas on the HO layout helps reduce congestion between the HO and N scale layouts as less people congregate around the N scale control station.

The discussion also concluded that the legacy layout needs work. Things to consider are the addition of switch machines once we have come up with the final track plan. One thing to consider is creating long passing sidings that will make operations easier. The long-term goal is to reduce the number of switches we have on the legacy layout.

The final decision today was to install additional Plexiglas along the aisle side of the layout at a lower height so members can decide on the best height. It was also determined, for now, to concentrate on the addition of traditional switch machines, such as Tortoise, rather than more exotic methods of switch control. The addition of switch machines and control panels could obviate the need for Plexiglas. Ken Howard will determine the number of machines in stock, and select a legacy module as the first test for installing machines.

By show of hands, it was determined that we have very few members who are currently capable of installing Tortoises. A work shop will be established to remedy this deficiency. Greg Rehe, Ken Howard, Don McPherson, and Chuck Larnerd volunteered to get training and help with installations.

6. New Crossover Operation

Paul Lebedinski explained the panel he has built to control the crossover under the mountain. If the LEDs show Green-Red-Green, then the switches are set for the main lines. If the LED's show Red-Green-Red, the switches are set for the crossover to be active.

Liam Bryant has completed the printing of the tunnel portals and they have been installed. Paul also noted that the mountain is ready to be completed and the track ballasted into the tunnels. Chuck Lenard requested that the track be inspected and passed before the installation of ballast. This should be true for any new track work.

7. Items to be reviewed for current status when Assigned Members are present:

Backdrops – Randy Foulke

Track Plan – Alec Urban

Hopper car order – Randy Foulke

Switch panel for logging camp – Bob Witwer

Redesign of engine service area – Collin Martinko/Randy Foulke

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm.