

Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club

Minutes of the HO Committee Meeting of November 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 Peter Donofrio, Dan Egy, Jake Forbes, Randy Foulke, Tom Garren, Mike Hinman, Ken Howard, Paul Lebiedenski, Don McPherson, Jim Smith, and Bob Witwer.

3. Updates

Ken listed the pending items from and since the October meeting.

A set of Rivarossi SCL passenger cars were deemed nice enough to be put into inventory for use on the Club layout.

Ken requested a volunteer to match our printed inventory to what is actually available on the Club shelves. Jake Forbes agreed to do this.

Ken noted that members have trouble putting the cars back in the proper designated place on the shelves. The distinction between box cars and reefers seems particularly taxing.

We also have a problem with members not properly reporting track issues. Members were asked to note where they experience trouble in the green book. It was further noted that Mike Hinman has installed an alarm system that sounds whenever a short circuit occurs on the layout. Members are asked to note exactly where they experience a short. Also note whether or not the short is repeatable. Also, please note the equipment you were running when the problem occurred. It is possible that the short occurred within your equipment and not the track.

We have now experienced two analog locomotives that run well on the test track, but when placed on the main layout, they will immediately short. This problem will be referred to Chuck Larnerd or Ralph James for analysis. Dan Egy noted that one of his locomotives shorts out on straight track.

Members are asked to write up a detailed report if this problem happens to you. Your observations may aid in identifying the solution.

Ken Howard asked members to look for problems in existing turnouts. Some are old and worn, and others do not work well nor do they conduct power as they should. This is especially true on some of the crossovers on the legacy portion of the layout. Realize that many crossovers will be removed under the current track plan. The crossovers that are

kept will receive new switches for improved operation. All crossovers will be number six or larger switches.

The new wye and the staging tracks on Main 2 will be taken up and reinstalled. Problems such as the kink coming out of the tunnels near the concrete plant will be fixed. A thirty inch radius curve will be reestablished there.

The HO layout operations manual has been completed. Ken Howard will distribute a digital copy to all that operate on that layout. Additionally, at least two hard copies will be available at the Clubhouse.

Several Peco switches were found in a recent donation. This negates the request for switches made to the members in an October email.

Mike Himan is holding up on the installation of switch machines on several modules until track adjustments and maintenance are completed.

Randy Foulke will install the backdrops discussed several months ago. Jim Smith suggested that the foam backing be reinforced with Masonite for added strength. Randy will construct several linear feet along the edge of Module 9.

At our October meeting, shelving to make staging easier was discussed. Mike Hinman is working on a shelf to go on the left side of the layout by the staging track. On the right side of the rear of the layout the existing table will be removed and replaced by new shelving. Pete Donofrio will take on this task.

Ken Howard reported that the Track committee has met and come up with a plan. Paul Lebedenski volunteered to create a thirty inch template to aid in fixing the curve previously mentioned.

Paul Lebedenski also requested two more boxes of trees. Check out his growing forest above the tunnel portals on the extension. Many trees are required to scenic the layout. Ken will obtain the boxes of trees from Nick's Trains. Randy Foulke suggested we also look at an eBay vendor in Viet Nam who sells trees at a very reasonable price. Ken also noted that we received some tall trees from Woodland Scenics in a recent donation.

On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving there will be a work session to expand the scenery on the mountain. John Spach's granddaughter will help access hard to reach areas of the layout.

Ken Howard noted that Module 4 needs scenery. This should include ballast and trackside details. Module 2 will get reworked to give additional access to the internal yard so scenic efforts should be paused on that module

Tom Garren noted that the staging track at left rear of the layout is now powered up all the time. This was formerly powered by the routing of the turnouts at either end of the siding to permit easy train building. The source of the power will be located and removed.

Ken Howard reminded everyone to clean switches by cleaning the points and determine if the little tabs that conduct power are in place.

The meeting adjourned at 1:56 pm. A work session to clean track and switches followed the meeting.