

Lower Makefield Township
Electric Reliability Committee (ERC)
January 14, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Present: Dan Grenier
Bernard Griga
Jason McFarland
Jason Simon
John Kingham
Lee Pedowicz

The January 14, 2021 virtual meeting of the Lower Makefield Township Electric Reliability Committee (ERC) was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Chairman Kingham.

Agenda: The meeting agenda is appended to these minutes. ([Attachment 1](#)).

- 1) **Approval of past minutes:** The minutes of the meeting of November 12, 2020 were approved with minor typographical corrections. (Pedowicz, Griga).
- 2) **Apologies:** None.
 - a) Mr. Kingham welcomed Mr. Simon back to the ERC following his health-related absence.

3) **PECO**

Proposed meeting with PECO:

Mr. Grenier affirmed that the ERC letter of November 12, 2020 written to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) has been reviewed and has been favorably received. He explained that the next step toward inviting PECO to give a virtual presentation to the Township is for it to be placed on the BOS meeting agenda which, to some extent, is beyond his control.

In response, Mr. Griga emphasized the extreme importance of letting PECO know that the meeting is meant to be informational and not emotive or confrontational. He added that the extreme emotions expressed by residents at past meetings had been very counter-productive.

Mr. Griga also emphasized that, in its invitation, the Township must emphasize the need for reliability metrics to allow us to assess whether there has been an improvement.

Mr. Simon pointed out that electricity reliability is an apolitical and extremely important issue for which the public must be given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Grenier agreed but added that the opportunity to ask those questions is up to the meeting Chair.

Mr. Simon added that, from his business experience, statistics are often used but in most cases, they are not helpful unless there is some common understanding of their meaning.

Mr. Kingham pointed out that reliability assessment through the smart meter program is the first item on the topics suggested in the ERC letter to the Township. Furthermore, the PUC reliability report for 2019 circulated to the committee has many pages devoted to the various reliability factors used such as CAIFI, SAIDI and more. Mr. Griga concurred but added that

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even though the smart meter program may provide data, it has no meaning if we do not have a baseline against which it can be assessed.

In response to a question from Mr. Grenier, Mr. Kingham confirmed that the committee has not contacted the PUC directly. From this, Mr. Grenier stated that he will work with our State Representatives (Senator Santarsiero and Representative Warren) to see what can be done to gain information relative to LMT. It was noted that Senator Santarsiero has requested information from residents online. However, Mr. Griga pointed out that previous attempts to gather feedback from residents had led to nothing of substance and that the feedback was very subjective.

In further discussion on the PUC report Mr. Grenier pointed out that, in 2020, PECO had taken at least three heavy hits from storms which will impact PECO's rating in the 2020 reliability report from the PUC.

Mr. Pedowicz questioned whether the objective was for a one-shot meeting or an ongoing dialog. Mr. Grenier stated that, in his view, the meeting with PECO is intended to start a dialog and a collaborative relationship. Mr. Pedowicz stated that, in his opinion, rather than start with reliability data, it would be best to invite PECO to give a presentation on the fundamentals of the electric power grid and the way in which power is distributed to the neighborhoods.

Mr. Grenier agreed with Mr. Pedowicz and suggested it could be expanded to describe what happens when an outage occurs, how it is handled by PECO and what steps are taken. Although Mr. Griga pointed out that, in the past, PECO has refused to provide any system details, such as the names of sub-stations referred to in the PUC report because they are constrained by national security concerns. Mr. Pedowicz acknowledged the point but still felt that a general presentation was the way to go.

Mr. Simon stated that the "how" is all well and good but the "why" is possibly of greater interest. Finding out "why" outages are occurring is most important. It would also be interesting to find out what other municipalities are doing in relation to vegetation. They may have ordinances that provide the ways and means of access to trees on private ground.

Mr. Simon questioned whether there are any concerns related to the political climate that we are in right now. Mr. Grenier responded that he thought not but it was most likely a matter for concern at the power grid level and not at the township distribution level.

Mr. McFarland stated that, since the only way a power utility can make money is to cut back on maintenance, a key question is how much PECO is spending on tree trimming. It was noted that this also tied into the point raised by Mr. Simon regarding access and things that the Township can do to help PECO.

In response to a question about how much detail we should give to PECO regarding our questions, Mr. Grenier opined that PECO will be given the framework but, as any presentation progresses, he expects further questions to arise.

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Mr. Simon suggested that, in view of the large number of whole house generators being installed in LMT, it would be interesting to get the Township Director of Planning and Zoning (Mr. Majewski) to provide the committee with an estimate of the number of generator permits issued. Mr. Grenier agreed noting that, in view of the pandemic and the number of people working from home, reliable power is now more critical than ever.

In response to a question from Mr. Pedowicz, Mr. Grenier confirmed that meetings do have to be open to the public. Mr. Pedowicz stated that he is not in favor of a public meeting because it would deter PECO but, both Mr. Grenier and Mr. Simon countered that, in their BOS experience, it adds a positive element of accountability.

Mr. Kingham concluded the discussion by emphasizing the importance of the meeting with PECO since, without PECO attendance, there is nothing that the committee can do to positively impact the reliability of the power supply.

4) PUC:

a) Contact:

It was agreed that, as discussed under the previous item, Mr. Grenier will ask our State representatives for advice on how best to contact the PUC. Mr Kingham stated that, if given the opportunity, he would ask the PUC whether there is any other municipality that is working collaboratively with the PUC as far as electric power reliability is concerned.

b) Reliability Report:

A link to the PUC Reliability Report for 2019 is included in the agenda and is repeated here:

https://www.puc.pa.gov/General/publications_reports/pdf/Electric_Service_Reliability2019.pdf

5) The way forward for the ERC:

It was agreed that the way forward for the ERC is to establish a good working relationship with PECO and, as such, the proposed meeting with PECO is critical.

6) Other Items:

- a. Mr. Simon undertook to reactivate his “we are customers” theme suggested at the October 2020 meeting specifically aimed at developing a quick and easy link on the Township website advising people what to do in the event of a power outage.
- b. Mr. McFarland asked Mr. Grenier to expand the request to Mr. Majewski for the number of generator permits (discussed earlier in this meeting) to be updated on a regular basis so that the committee can track the information.

7) Next Meeting: The next scheduled meeting of the ERC is on April 8, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.

8) Motion for Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

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Attachments:

1. [Agenda](#)
2. [Letter of November 12, 2020 to the BOS](#)

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Attachment 1

ERC Agenda Jan 14, 2021 Meeting – 7:30pm LMT Remote:

1. Approval of minutes of November 12, 2020 meeting - Kingham
2. Apologies
3. PECO
 Proposed meeting - Grenier
4. PUC
 - I. Contact
 - II. Reliability Report

https://www.puc.pa.gov/General/publications_reports/pdf/Electric_Service_Reliability2019.pdf
5. The way forward for the ERC
6. Other items
7. Set date, time, place for next ERC meeting
8. Motion for adjournment

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Attachment 2:

Supervisor D. Grenier
Lower Makefield Township
1100 Edgewood Road
Yardley
PA 19067

November 12, 2020

Dear Mr. Grenier,

Re: Electric Reliability – PECO Virtual Meeting

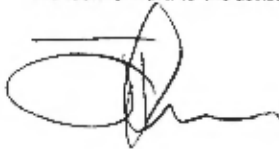
As discussed with you at the Electric Reliability Committee (ERC) on November 12, 2020 I am writing to seek the assistance of the Board in establishing a virtual meeting with PECO.

From our communications with PECO in years past, notably with Mr. Ted Dorand and representatives of the PECO engineering department, we believe that, given the recent spate of power outages, it is now time to reacquaint ourselves with PECO in a virtual meeting with the following questions/topics on the agenda:

1. The status of the smart meter program with an emphasis on the reliability metrics being gathered by the new system.
2. PECO outage communications – inaccuracies and misleading information.
3. Status of the PECO infrastructure in LMT
 - a. Upgrades since 2015?
 - b. Have the changes to the PECO distribution system in the northern part of LMT performed as expected?
 - c. Status of the vegetation trimming program?
 - d. Underground vs. overhead distribution - are underground system failures becoming more prevalent?
 - e. Any planned upgrades such as overhead primary hardening against tree damage?

In 2019 Mr. Dorand requested that all future communications go through the Township. Consequently, we are asking for your assistance in setting up a virtual meeting with the audience limited to the ERC and Township officials.

We look forward to the assistance of the Board.



John Kingham
215-805-7666