

Lower Makefield Township
Electric Reliability Committee (ERC)
July 12, 2018
Meeting Minutes

Present: Kristin Tyler
Bernard Griga
John Kingham
Lee Pedowicz
Jason McFarland (prospective committee member)

Apologies: None

The July 12, 2018 meeting of the Lower Makefield Township Electric Reliability Committee (ERC) was called to order at 7:03 PM in the offices of the Lower Makefield Township 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 June 21, 2018 were approved. (Griga/Pedowicz).

Preamble: Chairman Kingham again welcomed Mr. McFarland as a prospective member of the committee.

2) PECO

June 27 Meeting: The report of the meeting with PECO on June 27 ([Attachment 2](#)) previously circulated to members of the committee was discussed. The conclusions are recorded under item 3a below.

3) Other Items:

a) The way forward for the ERC: In the discussion of the meeting with PECO on June 27, it was agreed that the only way in which the committee can move forward and monitor any meaningful reliability progress is to have regular access to the “street-level” metrics monitored by PECO. Even though, in the past, the committee has had access to the PECO reliability reports submitted to the PUC, the data has been too general to be of any practical use in relation to LMT and the ERC. To this end, the following action items were agreed:

i) Supervisor Tyler will request the assistance of State Representative Warren to urge PECO to do the following:

(1) Provide reliability data that is more applicable to LMT.

(2) Request that PECO also advise the Township whenever letters are sent to residents advising them of planned maintenance outages.

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ii) The residential standby generator permit data maintained by the Township will be reviewed to see whether, by canvassing the owners, any outage data is routinely gathered.

b) **PJM Interconnection Tour:** Mr. Pedowicz confirmed that the tour of the PJM electric power control center will be on July 18, 2018.

4) Next ERC Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting should be on Thursday August 9, 2018.

5) Motion for Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Attachments:

1. [Agenda](#)
2. [PECO meeting June 27 report](#)

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ERC Agenda July 12, 2018 Meeting – 7:00pm LMT:

1. Approval of minutes of June 21, 2018 meeting
2. PECO
 - I. Report on the June 27 meeting with PECO.
3. Other items
 - I. The way forward for the ERC
 - II. PJM Interconnection tour
4. Set date, time, place for next ERC meeting
5. Motion for adjournment

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LMT-ERC-PECO Meeting June 27, 2018

Purpose: Discuss topics of interest to the residents of Lower Makefield arising from the multiple power failures during the March storms and gain an update on PECO's reliability enhancement work.

Attendees:

Theodore (Ted) Dorand – PECO External Affairs Manager, Bucks County

Kristin Tyler - LMT Supervisor

John Kingham – Chairman, LMT Electric Reliability Committee (ERC),

Discussion:

- 6) Storm Performance - Inaccurate “power restored” messages and tardy response times:** In response to questions related to the numerous complaints voiced by residents concerning PECO's performance during the winter storms in March 2018, Mr. Dorand prefaced his remarks with an outline of the impact of the weather from PECO's point of view and lessons-learned. These were:
- a) Infrastructure Damage:** The extent of the damage to PECO's infrastructure was greater than the damage caused by Super Storm Sandy in 2012.
 - b) Call Volume:** PECO typically receives about 1.5m calls each year related to outages. However, in March alone, there were around 1.1m calls during the three storms. The call volume exceeded PECO's ability to respond and, as a result, steps are being taken internally to implement changes from the lessons-learned. This includes a complete review of the automated message system which led to inaccurate “power has been restored” text or voice feedback to customers.
 - c) Message System:** It was explained that the messages are triggered by feedback from PECO crews in the field progressively working “down the line”. When there are multiple damage points on any one circuit it is sometimes assumed that all customers on that circuit have been restored when only one part of the line is repaired.
 - d) Message Format:** It was suggested to Mr. Dorand that a simple change to the message would seem to be in order to avoid the erroneous “your power has been restored” communication.
 - e) Mutual Assistance:** PECO is part of the “Mid-Atlantic Mutual Assistance Organization”. This organization anticipates and coordinates assistance around the region between power utilities whenever a major storm is expected. In this way, crews from other areas can be quickly deployed whenever any damage exceeds the local capability. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of the assistance quickly diminishes when the storm is widespread. This

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leads to unavoidable customer irritation when the PECO response appears to be tardy or call-backs are not received.

- 7) **Fair Weather Outages:** Aside from storm response, the question of PECO's response to fair-weather outages was discussed since PECO's response often appears to be slow. Mr. Dorand said that the response time is geared to the extent of the any outage and whether roadways are affected by downed wires. In addition, feedback from any police or emergency personnel on the scene is considered when redirecting repair crews to an outage.
- 8) **Underground cables** were discussed since several areas have been affected by cable failures. Mr. Dorand said that, for the most part, the failures are due to a combination of age and damage caused by tree roots and indiscriminate digging. The ongoing work in Yardley Hunt and the planned work in the Mirror Lake development was discussed an example of the on-going upgrade work being carried out by PECO.
- 9) **Private Property Access:** Mr. Dorand was reminded that the Township stands ready to help PECO if it faces any resistance from the owners of private property when PECO needs access to carry out tree-trimming or removal.
- 10) **Tree Trimming:** It was agreed with Mr. Dorand that there is little that can be done in the face of claims by residents of inconsiderate tree trimming by PECO. It was agreed that, while trimming trees back to terminal growth is unsightly, it is something that PECO cannot avoid if it is to prevent vegetation regrowth and impingement on its lines.
- 11) **Brief Outages:** Mr. Dorand explained that, as part of the area upgrade program, PECO has reconfigured some of its circuits to provide increased reliability through "looping". Coupled with automated switches (reclosers), looping provides alternative power supply paths to minimize the impact of any outage. The downside to this improvement is that the number of brief outages will increase but this is preferable to widespread outages.
- 12) **On-going Work:** Mr. Dorand expanded upon the extent of the work now in progress around Lower Makefield as part of the reliability improvement program. He said that the extent of the work since 2014 is now near \$26m and, in addition to the underground cable work in Yardley Hunt and Mirror Lake, it includes the removal of the frequently flooded substations along the canal and, in the eastern part of the Township, an increase in the primary voltage to 34kV and associated looping.

It was noted that, even though the reliability enhancement work is generally understood and is open for all to see, Mr. Dorand did not provide any reliability metrics to support the program.
- 13) **Smart Meters:** Mr. Dorand stated that the smart meter program has been generally successful. He further explained that, in the event of an outage, the meter feedback is enhanced by the PECO fiber network and does not rely on data sent over the power line.

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14) LMT Permitting: When asked whether PECO must submit permit applications for work that it undertakes within the Township, Mr. Dorand said that it doesn't unless the work involves a road or sidewalk excavation.