

The following Online and Social Media guidance resources for the Village of Montour Falls are extracted here from a larger public engagement document developed by and for the Montour Falls Sustainability Committee.

4 - Online and Social Media

4.1 Overview

Maintaining a robust presence on Social Media as well as an up-to-date website are both key pillars to an effective civic engagement strategy. No matter one's level of digital familiarity, everyone gets information on the internet at some point. This makes having a website to host links, and at least one social media account dedicated to promoting relevant information both vital tools of informing and engaging the public.

Sustainable Montour Falls will be in charge of managing the Village's website and social media presence as it relates to sustainability initiatives. This arrangement works for two reasons: first, as the central coordinating body for civic participation in sustainability programming for the Village, Sustainable Montour Falls would have access to resources related to all of the campaigns, and will be best suited to orchestrate a comprehensive strategy, and; second, the broad scope of the Sustainability Committee means that the entire burden to post and curate online resources will not fall solely to Village staff, who are already tasked with a great many of the Village operations.

Currently, the Village maintains a Facebook Page and a local Village Website. While the Facebook page and website are kept up to date, and are already used to inform and engage residents. The website includes such information as Board Meeting minutes and dates, as well as links to Village laws, the Library and the Farmers Market, in addition to basic contact information for the Village. The Village of Montour Falls Facebook page posts updates related to public meetings, as well as news and events occurring within the Village. In addition, Sustainable Montour Falls operates a Twitter account¹ and an email address², through which the Village can interact with other relevant State and Regional entities, promote resources and content related to sustainability, and keep residents informed of meetings and actions via list-serv.

4.2 Content Summary

While the scope of Sustainable Montour Falls is broad, considering that the Village's sustainability actions have ranged from LED light bulbs to street redevelopment, there are throughlines that connect these actions together, especially the educational and

¹ <https://twitter.com/FallsMontour>

² sustainablemontourfalls@gmail.com

engagement campaigns described in this guide. In addition, the online and social media outreach efforts should adhere to these guidelines:

- The content to be shared and hosted using the Village's online resources must relate to sustainability, particularly the Village's stated sustainability goals in the CSC pledge resolution.
 - This can include articles and information related to energy use, renewable energy, energy reduction, waste reduction, sustainable and economic development, emergency and disaster preparedness, recycling, composting, or other sustainability elements of interest.
- The content must relate as directly as possible to life in Montour Falls. Should the content be deemed of importance without specifically mentioning the Village, such as articles related to home energy, it can be posted. Articles referencing specific circumstance in neighboring communities, or shared or posted as part of a broader New York State, regional, or even some national campaign will also be accepted provided the material is relevant to residents of the Village.

4.3 Strategy

Different information and resources will be better suited to different platforms. In addition, not all of the above campaigns will come to fruition at the same pace or at the same time, which will necessitate a continuous strategy for posting, updating, and keeping the public informed.

In addition, given the potentially politically volatile reaction to posts and information related to Climate Change, the Village and Sustainable Montour Falls should take care that their posts and information hosted will not cause unnecessary trouble among the online public, while also maintaining their responsibility to engage and inform residents of Montour Falls.

4.3.1 The Montour Falls Village Website

Since the Sustainability Committee has met on behalf of the Village, and indeed its creation was approved and encouraged by the Village in order to meet its sustainability goals, it makes sense that information related to the Village's sustainability actions should be hosted on that platform. The addition of a section for Sustainable Montour Falls should look as follows:

- A tab should be created on the government website³ that reads "Sustainability."
 - The page should be formatted in the form of other pages on the government website in order to maintain an aesthetic throughline for the project.

³ The choice was made to create a page on the existing Village website rather than purchase a new domain name in order to save on costs associated with website maintenance.

- The page will contain links to other Village web pages containing information about the Sustainability Committee.⁴
- This page will contain, at minimum, the following information:
 - A brief summary of the Village’s sustainability goals, including the CSC pledge. This summary should contain the goals of the sustainability actions for the Village, as well as the status of actions completed or in progress.
 - A timeline of the Village’s efforts on sustainability outcomes, such as participation in the Clean Energy Communities Program, enrollment in a CCA, or other such actions.
 - Links to relevant sustainability partners, including but not limited to:
 - NYS DEC and their pages relating to sustainability actions, especially CSC.
 - NYSERDA, including pages promoting programs designed to help residents with efficiency or energy reduction outcomes.
 - Businesses who are partnering with Sustainable Montour Falls, and at what level given those defined elsewhere in this document.
 - Information regarding “Steps You Can Take”, outlining simple actions residents can take to get involved.
 - An online form for email addresses and contact information for residents looking for more information, contact, or to join the Sustainability Committee

4.3.2 Facebook

The Village Facebook page is primarily used to post information related to public meetings. However, the medium of Facebook and the demographics that tend to use it most often make the platform well suited not only for promoting public events, but also for sharing content related to the campaigns above, including:

- Energy reduction strategies
- Waste reduction strategies
- Other, related sustainability actions that residents can undertake
- State, regional, and local news related to sustainability ventures or opportunities that residents may be able to take advantage of, including community solar.
- Local development projects related to sustainable and economic development goals of the Village, especially as they relate to future sustainable and economic development for the area and Village.

4.3.3 Twitter

Twitter offers a unique platform to share content and connect with partner agencies that is distinct from the comparatively long-form Facebook. In addition, the timeline function moves much faster than Facebook and especially the update schedule for a website.

⁴ The web address is: <https://www.villageofmontourfalls.com/sustainability.html>

This makes Twitter the ideal platform for posting small to large updates on programs and projects, reminders about public meetings and events, and reacting to partner organizations.

The Village of Montour Falls has authorized the creation of a dedicated Sustainable Montour Falls Twitter account⁵ for the purpose of interacting with residents and other entities on topics related to sustainability within the Village.

in addition to other potential actions, seek to accomplish the following:

- Post regular updates about public meetings and events while tagging relevant outside-the-Village actors.
- Seek to follow organizations that promote sustainability and economic development outcomes in line with the Village's own, including:
 - NYSDEC; NYSERDA; CCE Schuyler County; Schuyler County Government; SCOPED; local partners such as: local businesses, Schuyler County Historical Society, etc.
- Engage in conversations and article/content sharing in areas related to the campaigns described above, including:
 - Local business engagement and sustainability initiatives; resident energy reduction programs; renewable energy; sustainable and economic development; etc.

4.3.4 Email Account

In order to better manage sustainability engagement efforts, the Village of Montour Falls has endorsed the creation of a separate email account that will be used specifically to communicate on topics, questions, and tasks related to sustainability efforts within the Village. This email account will be shared jointly between appropriate CCE Schuyler Staff, Village Staff, and authorized Sustainability Committee members as needed.⁶

⁵ The account can be found at <https://twitter.com/SustainableVMF> under the name SustainableMontourFalls, and the handle @SustainableVMF.

⁶ The email account for the Sustainability Committee is sustainablemontourfalls@gmail.com. An alternate email client (i.e. not @villageofmontourfalls.com) was selected due to the cost of adding an additional email address to the Village server. In the future, the Village and Sustainability Committee will explore options for adding a dedicated email account to the Village server.