

About the City
By: Councilman Kingery
June 21, 2016

Here is more information about the composting of grass clippings and other yard trimmings:

After my article last week I had a gentleman call to visit about the grass clippings and the garbage collection. I had mentioned a possible solution of purchasing an extra container to use for grass clippings and take that to a compost receptacle located at multiple places around the City. (Check the City web site for locations; www.cityofdouglas.org.) He mentioned that he did not have a vehicle that he could haul the container in and that he and many elderly people probably could not dispose of the lawn clippings in that way. Per my discussion with him, and other people, here are some more options that may or may not work for you.

1. If you collect the grass in a smaller plastic garbage bag you might be able to haul that in your car trunk or SUV rear compartment. You need to empty the clippings or other trimmings out of the bag when you get to the dumpster as the plastic will not be wanted in with the compost.
2. One person told me they never collect the grass but use a mulching mower and that takes care of the grass clippings.
3. Another said they just mow without collecting in a bag and in the spring have their lawn thatched and the thatch is hauled away by the person that does the thatching. Depending upon how thick your lawn is, this might be a good solution, or not!
4. You can make yourself a compost pile of grass clippings and add dirt and water to get the clippings to rot into compost. This can later be used for gardening work. A little research can teach you how best to accomplish this. I think Councilman Doug Olson, a master gardener, would be happy to advise you on making your compost.
5. One older gentleman told me that he cannot mow his lawn anymore so hires it done. Who ever does his lawn also takes away the grass as part of the job. This brings up another idea.
6. Would any of the private lawn care businesses be willing to collect the grass from those that mow their own lawns and dispose of the clippings as a service they offer? They would need to charge a fee but perhaps could also furnish the container that is labeled for grass/clippings as part of their service. They could add this to their service and advertise the same in the newspaper and you could request their service. Or, you could just call one of them right away and see if they might offer this service.

Yes, I understand that this is going to cost some money, and I am sure each of us understands that one way or another, we all have to pay. I can deliver at my own expense; I can pay someone else; or, I can expect the City to do it for me, but ultimately, one way or another, I will pay for having my grass disposed of just the same as for the

other types of garbage. Remember, this discussion started because I found we were going to be charged double the rate if the Casper Landfill operators found we had compost contaminated garbage. We all need to work together to dispose of our garbage the cheapest way we can. If we get the grass to the City Landfill it is made into compost which you can get back free if you want some for gardening.

I also found out why the grass/compost is not allowed in with the other garbage. Grass clippings, especially, will generate heat; most of us have experienced this when we later empty the container. In the Landfill, it does the same and can even cause a fire. Remember last year's fire at the Casper Regional Landfill? Although grass clippings and compostable materials didn't happen to be the cause of that fire, the Casper Landfill people are very aware of the potential for a fire problem.

In visiting with John Harbarger, the Public Works Director, I find we have been getting a great increase in the amount of recycling activity by the public. This is exactly what we need to happen. Everything you can recycle stays out of the garbage cycle and does not have to be transported to Casper and we do not have to pay a fee to place it in the Casper Landfill. Fill those compost dumpsters with your clippings because it costs very little for the City to collect it on a regular basis, and at the same time it prevents the likely double charge when we get to the Casper Landfill. John also informed me that the charge goes to \$86 per ton instead of \$74 as I reported before. (I hate it when I make mistakes!)

John asked me to remind you that our recycle bins are double sided, so if you find one side full, just around the back side it might be empty! We have a baler for cardboard and just recently completed our first bale of aluminum cans. Not only does the price increase for the baled material, but we can also haul a lot more in each load for almost the same cost. Please drive by and take a look at the recycle place near you and start helping reduce the cost to everyone.

This is a City problem and we are the City! We can all work together for the benefit of everyone, or we can ignore the problem, do nothing to help out, and all of us will be paying a lot more than we are now. Together we can make a difference! Thanks, and your feedback is welcome!