

Andrew: Hello, many communities are taking a stand on Confederate monuments in their cities, Pensacola's Mayor has yet to say directly what he thinks should happen to the one here.

WEAR Woman 1: Now there's a petition asking the Mayor to remove the confederate statue in downtown Pensacola.

WEAR Woman 2: We don't necessarily have to destroy the statue, it just needs to be moved perhaps to a museum where we can talk about it in context rather than glamorizing the confederacy.

WEAR Woman 1: The mayor has not commented directly about the monument, but issued a statement on Tuesday condemning hate groups and violence that occurred in Charlottesville.

Andrew: Alright WEAR taking the position that the mayor has not taken a position on this yet, so naturally we want to give him a chance to take a position. Mayor Hayward joins us every Wednesday at about this time, Mayor welcome back to the Pensacola Morning News Sir.

**Mayor: Good Morning Andrew, how are you?**

Andrew: I'm doing great, I'm doing great. So we have another controversy related to the confederacy, of course the flags and all that that too place two years ago, and now we have the confederate monuments including Lee Square and you know there's two petitions: one to save and one to remove. And I know you guys have been thinking about this and talking about it. Where is the city at from the Mayor's Office's perspective on this issue of Lee Square?

**Mayor: Let me make a statement Andrew, I mean diversity and inclusivity is what makes us strong in our city, in our state, in our country, and you know a great nation doesn't hide its history it faces its flaws and corrects them. And we've been around the clock looking at this and right now when it comes to the two petitions, we're examining the history and the purpose of what it is, and we know there's a law on the books that was passed in 2010 that's what we were talking about and as everyone knows, I took down the Confederate flags in 2015. And one of your quotes on there, I heard someone said, you know putting these things in the proper context. And that's what we did obviously with the flags and we're examining this law right now that's on the books right now what it talks about. And it mentions about having a committee when you change monuments and change the description, so that's what we're looking at right now, Andrew and everyone I think completely understands and I've reiterated numerous times my unequivocal belief that hate and bigotry have no place in Pensacola, our state or America. And I condemn these white supremacists and Neo-Nazis and Ku Klux Klan. It's vile, it's disgusting and we're not going to stand for it.**

Andrew: You know, and that's, I think it's so important. See, that's that everyone wanted to hear the President say, clearly from the beginning, and I think it's, you know that's what everybody wants to be sure that you believe in. It's so easy to say that and to follow through on

it. And even you, you caught a lot of slack back a couple of years ago for getting rid of the battle flag and city displays and you know, you did that on your own initiative. As you mentioned, this law from back in the day, I think it might be 2000, but anyway this law, it restricts what you can do unilaterally, but City Council's going to have to work on...

**Mayor: Well I started going down that... yeah, it's your point that I got back in town and started going down that path unilaterally doing that and, you know, they had to say 'Hey there's a law in the books that you got to look at.' And, you know, I respect the law and that's one of the most important things when you're in a position like mine to look at that. And I have a track record of coming out against this and as I said, diversity and inclusivity is what I'm all about and what our city's all about. I mean, that's how we're great as a community and its vile and disgusting what we've witnessed from Saturday until today.**

Andrew: I want to make sure that I'm understanding you correctly, what I thought I heard you just say is if it were just up to Ashton Hayward, you would move the confederate monument, did I misunderstand you?

**Mayor: No. I mean, you understood me correctly. You know, I was moving towards that and we had a meeting yesterday about what was on the books and on the laws and you know, I think it's very important that we obviously always follow the letter of the law and the City Attorney right now is working on that as we speak and we're going to focus in on that.**

Andrew: Again, if you had your way, there's a big process involved here, but if you had your way would you want to see that statue put somewhere else or do you just want to see it taken down and done with? Do you want to see something else at that site? What's your vision of this?

**Mayor: I think it needs to be put in the proper context and we've seen what it's done to our country for, you know, years, 100 years, and we're facing it. Our country is in complete disarray right now with how people feel completely alienated. They have fear, they don't feel connected, they have no hope and the last thing we need is this spreading across our country right here in Pensacola. In Pensacola, the people are people of inclusion and that's what we need to be focused on. And that's the things that make people feel a part of what we're trying to do in our community.**

Andrew: You know, one of the things that you and I had talked about in the past is the possibility of other monuments around town. When the Sunday House came down, I asked you whether you would be open to the possibility of having a John Sunday monument because he was such a historic figure here. And with the Galvez statue that's going up on Palafox down below the hill, do you still favor sort of expanding the number of monuments and increasing the diversity of the monuments that we have in town?

**Mayor: Absolutely. I mean, we have so many people that have done so many great things in our great country and in our city. And you know, you can't make a rash decision. You have to**

**look at the logic and the data behind that before you make that kind of decision. And we don't want to marginalize anyone in our community. That's one of the things we've worked so hard to have inclusivity in our community- diversity since I've been in office and that's why I want to make sure that straight statements that I made yesterday reiterating my unequivocal belief that hate and bigotry have no place in America or Pensacola or our great state of Florida. You know, that's not who we are as a nation and we got to push that from a local level, a town like Pensacola, all the way across our great country.**

Andrew: So, in your mind, keeping the Lee Square monument would be keeping a symbol of hate, bigotry—would be keeping a negative symbol like that? So that's why you oppose it, that's why you want to bring it down?

**Mayor: Well I think, like I said, all these monuments have to be put in the proper context and if we're going to move forward and we're going to address these things seriously we need look- that history is very important Andrew. And I was talking late into the hours of last night, my wife and son were at Holocaust camp in Belgium when they visited this summer and in history, and what it teaches us and what it teaches our children is what not to do and who we don't want to be. And as they grow up into this world and see the past horrific tragedies that have happened throughout history, I think history is important to learn from. But when it's going to divide a country, or a state, or a city, you know, as elected officials, you got to name it, call it out, and say this is what we're going to do to move forward.**

Andrew: Wow, well very clear words. I appreciate you taking such a clear stance on it. I think a lot of people, as you know, a lot of people are going to be frustrated with that and a lot of people are cheering in their cars right now. I did want to ask you briefly about another issue that's come up within the last couple of days, it's historic but not controversial. And that's the repaving project downtown, where they've discovered bricks, you know this is all about preservice and creating what Pensacola's going to be for the future, right? You've got asphalt being laid over bricks, as they are discovering its bricks underneath. I assume that the city is now working to preserve the bricks, because that's also part of the ordinance, right?

**Mayor: Absolutely. And I think, you know, unfortunately people make mistakes and I guess one of the companies that was doing work for us paved over some of our bricks which is a big part of history. And, you know, we've talked about that and we want to preserve that. I was just up in New York and walked on numerous streets of bricks and it's a very important part of our history and you got to look at every little detail. And I think you and I have talked about it on your show a thousand times, I'm obsessed with details and we would really like to have a lot more brick streets and obviously you got to put on your mayors hat and say how much is it going to be, what's the impact of that, to do it or not do it. I think, you know looking at our history and obviously when it comes to our streets, that's a very important part of the fabric of Pensacola. And so we had that discussion yesterday afternoon because I was getting up to speed on it and if we can have more brick streets, we need to try to make that happen.**

Andrew: Very good. Quickly, the lightning round before we let you go, Mayor Ashton Hayward, we're entering football season rapidly. UWF is having media day today. Do you have a sport that you most love to watch?

**Mayor: For me, obviously it would be golf. The PGA up in Charlotte, NC was amazing over the weekend, so yeah I'm a big golfer so that's that I probably like to watch.**

Andrew: Well I thought that would be your answer but I was curious to ask the question. And lastly, Monday- huge event, everybody's talking about the eclipse. A lot of concern about safety of people's eyes. Are you and An and your son planning on watching the eclipse with your eyes, or not?

**Mayor: We are. We got some glasses and were going to watch it. Aidan's all into it and so we're planning on watching it so we'll see what happens.**

Andrew: Alright, very good Mayor Ashton Hayward I expect you'll be getting some calls and emails throughout the day, no surprise there. Thank you for joining us, thank you for taking such a clear position on this issue. I appreciate the time, Sir.

**Mayor: Andrew, thank you I greatly appreciate the time.**