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## Hamilton councillors want 'complete truth' as they approve Red Hill Parkway judicial inquiry

The Hamilton News shares Eli S. Lederman's expert advice provided to Hamilton's city council on whether to proceed with a judicial inquiry into the Red Hill Valley Parkway report.

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A legal expert, Eli Lederman, of the law firm Lenczner Slaght Royce Griffin, presented a 37-page report to councillors that recommended councillors establish an auditor general to conduct the investigation. He said a judicial review, while providing an open and transparent process through a public hearing such an inquiry, could take years and cost millions of dollars. An auditor general, or ombudsman review – the two other options before councillors - would cost less than half a million dollars and take months rather than years to complete.

Lederman referenced judicial inquiries, such as the City of Toronto computer leasing scandal, that have seen their budgets balloon from \$1 million to about \$11 million and took three-and-a-half years to complete.

“Judicial inquiries are better suited for large, complex investigations and, as such, tend to be expensive and lengthy,” he said.

The Collingwood judicial inquiry, which began last year and is examining why the city sold its share of its utility to a private company, was budgeted at over \$1 million and is expected to exceed that amount.

Lederman said a judicial inquiry can take a long time and it has the authority to examine issues that are revealed during the process that might not have been studied prior to the investigation.

But the majority of councillors said conducting a judicial review is essential to restore the public trust of the community.

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