We need projects like this

This should be a no-brainer.

Rockwell Development Group, which manages the Hanover Square townhouse development at Hanover Street and the Industrial Highway, proposes to convert the historic Mey-erhoff shirt factory into 28 market rate condominiums.

With big windows, high ceil-ings, and spectacular views of the Schuylkill River, these condominums should attract dis-cerning buyers with ample fi-nancial resources.

The factory building’s loca-tion along the Schuylkill River greenway, and its close proximity to Route 422 and the downtown, makes the units particularly appealing.

Factory buildings like these have been renovated into fashionable condon-inums and apartments in cities all across the country.

The hold-up is parking. The devel-op-er doesn’t have enough parking spaces to meet the zoning ordinance.

But that’s only because the 2003 zoning ordinance, which I wrote with solicitor Chuck Garner, was amended in 2015 to double the amount of parking spaces required for one bedroom dwelling from one space per unit to two spaces per unit.

Such thinking is all well and good in suburbia, where there is ample room for parking lots, but not Potts-town, where old factory buildings are interspersed with residential neighbor-hoods of closely spaced houses.

But some vocal council members thought it was better to have gems like the Meyerhoff building sit vacant for decades rather than have resi-dents occasionally walk an extra couple of yards to a parking space.

There’s plenty of parking downtown. In 2003, a study for the borough by Tim Haahs As-sociates counted 1,281 off-street parking spaces down-town, not including any of the then-Mrs. Smith’s com-plex. And that study did not count the hundreds of on-street parking spaces.

Last week, Council gave its bless-ing to a creative proposal by Rock-well Development Co. to make Char-lotte Street one-way south from the downtown, thus gaining more spaces adja-cent to the Meyerhoff building.

It’s now up to the Pottstown Zon-ing Hearing Board to approve or re-ject the proposal.

Seldom has an issue been more clear-cut. This proposal is a big win for Pottstown — making the highest and best use of a unique and irre-placeable community asset.