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News Release

Contact: Mike Terson
Superintendent of Communications and Marketing
Buffalo Grove Park District
Phone: 847.850.2116
Fax: 847.459.5741
Email: mike@bgparks.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Buffalo Grove Park District Commissioner Dr. Larry Reiner Celebrates 35 Years On Park Board

(Buffalo Grove Park District, Buffalo Grove, IL) - On April 7, Dr. Larry Reiner celebrated 35 years on the Buffalo Grove Park District Board of Commissioners. He is the longest serving Park Board Commissioner in the history of the Buffalo Grove Park District.

Reiner was first elected in 1987, and has been reelected consecutively in every election thereafter. When asked what made him want to be a Park Board Commissioner, Reiner said he had moved to the community a few years earlier, and was working in the field of parks and recreation as the executive director at a special recreation association. He highlighted the opportunity to work with the District's executive director at the time, Mike Rylko, saying, "He was arguably one of the most respected directors in the State of Illinois and the country." Reiner added, "It was a chance to give back, while working with a dynamic team of individuals who had vision and professional commitment to bring great resources to our community. I wanted to be part of that."

Reiner also credits his parents and brothers for setting an example of giving back to special needs children and adults throughout their lives. "It felt like a perfect fit to join this group of people who were open minded and proactive in serving everyone in our community. We were a growing community, and I was given an opportunity to help shape our futures."

The District has grown exponentially, and seen a lot changes over Dr. Reiner's 35 years on the Park Board. Reiner is quick to credit the staff and his fellow commissioners for the many accomplishments the District has seen during his tenure. Some of the achievements he highlighted were securing land, and preserving it for future generations, developing a state of the art fitness center, accessible playgrounds throughout our community, inclusion services for special needs children and adults in all of our programs and services, and the expansion and inclusion of programs and services reflecting the cultural and ethnic diversity of our community. Dr. Reiner also expressed his appreciation for being part of a dynamic team of people who persevered through the COVID-19 pandemic with compassion, professionalism, caring and creativity.

Dr. Reiner said, "I am particularly proud of our District's commitment to military veterans, active-duty service men and women, as well as all of our first responders. The Buffalo Grove Park District took a significant leadership role in creating community-based services for disabled veterans, and established a program through the Healthy Minds-Healthy Bodies program and AllenForce Veterans Initiative, and they now serve over 2,800 veterans and their families. The Board and staff's vision helped make this a reality."

He added, "The single most important accomplishment for us was and is the securing of outstanding administrative leadership for our District. Mike Rylko, Dan Schimmel and Ryan Risinger have been remarkable to work with over my 35 years as a Commissioner. We could not have hoped for better leadership in the COVID-19 pandemic than Ryan Risinger. I am so very proud of him and his team of professional leaders."

Ryan Risinger, who became the District's executive director in 2014, has known Dr. Reiner since first joining the District as an intern in 1992. When asked about what Dr. Reiner has meant to the Buffalo Grove Park District during his time on the Park Board, Risinger said, "We simply would not be the park district that we are today without Larry. His knowledge, leadership, professionalism and foresight has impacted us in ways that have literally changed the trajectory of our goals and progress over multiple decades." Risinger added, "Honestly, it's difficult to envision our future without the benefit of his knowledge, wisdom, guidance and leadership. Larry has always been extremely supportive of our entire staff; and, he's been the voice of reason on so many things over the years. He's a huge part of why our agency has experienced so much stability and success for so long."

When asked about the future of the Park District, Dr. Reiner recognizes that the world is changing, and thinks that we need to change with it. He is confident that the District will continue its commitment to excellence and compassion, pointing out that the values of the District will determine its future.

"I think it is important that while we need to continue to listen to our community, we also need to take a professional approach to bringing services to the community. The community is counting on us to lead, not to follow. Stay on the cutting edge and truly care about our residents and all our neighbors. Rather than list specific projects or facilities, I would defer to our professionals to help the Board and community make great decisions. Inform and educate the Board, and lead us in the best direction for our community. We have great master plans for our parks that have had significant input from our community. Let's be creative and resourceful, and make our children's dreams come true."

When asked what it has meant to serve the community for 35 years, Reiner said, "Serving on the Board of Commissioners for the Buffalo Grove Park District has been extremely rewarding and inspiring at the same time. I have had the privilege of serving at a time when the District has had some of the most impactful leaders in the field as the executive director. Serving with a remarkable group of fellow commissioners, we have had a team of dedicated staff and elected individuals who were committed to excellence and respect for diversity and inclusion, while remaining financially responsible and transparent to our residents. This gave me an opportunity to listen, learn, and be part of cutting-edge management in the field of parks and recreation. I have thoroughly enjoyed watching our community grow, while giving back what I could along the journey. The District has truly become an extension of my family."

Dr. Reiner will be presented with a Resolution, acknowledging his 35 years on the Park Board of Commissioners at the Board Workshop Meeting on Monday, May 9 at 6 pm at the Alcott Center, located at 530 Bernard Drive in Buffalo Grove.

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