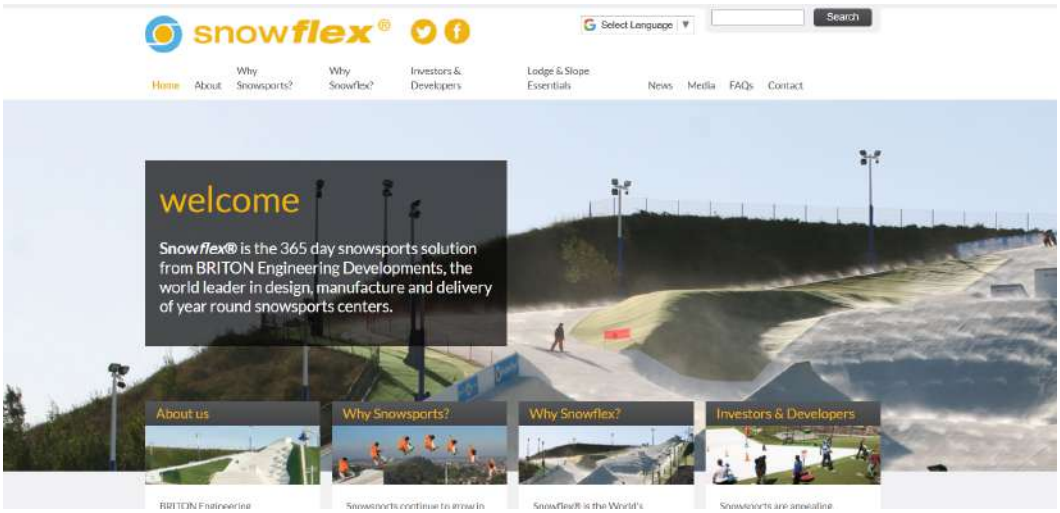
Snowflex Email Exchange

August 28, 2022

A community member first called Briton Engineering, makers of Snowflex, in the UK on August 15, 2022, asking whether representatives there had contact, knew of, or had spoken to Dan Powell, anyone representing CHDS, LLC, or knew of a proposed Snowflex Ski Hill in Round Lake, IL. She was told they were unaware of anyone by that name or any planned project in the Midwest US. You can hear her comments on the audio from the public hearing on August 15, beginning at 1:09:00.



Snowflex is the year-round system at the center of Dan Powell's Ski Hill proposal. You can visit the Snowflex website to see how turnkey Briton has created this product. From setting up your business plan to designing your ski runs, lodge, and parking lot, Briton Engineering does all of it, and you cannot simply buy their product without the other design, installation, and consulting costs associated--something Dan Powell has neglected to fully disclose, pursue, or discuss to this day.

His initial proposal to the Village of Round Lake did not include cost estimates for building the Ski Hill using Briton Engineering services, supplies, or materials--including the Snowflex itself. Later meetings and public hearings still have not produced any cost estimates associated with using Snowflex.

The following screen captures reflect an email exchange between Janet Smart, a Round Lake resident, and Chris Thomas, Design Manager for Briton Engineering in the UK. Redactions are made to remove Janet's personal information, such as her email, address, and phone number.

Janet's email to Chris took place on August 20, 2022.

From: Janet A Smart
[redacted]
Sent: 20 August 2022 06:36
To: Info <Info@snowflex.com>
Subject: a couple of questions

There is currently a debate with the residents of Round Lake and the county, the Village of Round Lake Trustees, and the developer about the viability of how SnowFlex will work under the developer's presented proposed plans since there is a lack of specifications from Snow Flex in his presentation and would appreciate your assistance in clarification.

The background to the question is our Village Trustees are thinking about annexing just under 100 acres of currently zoned farmland located on the corner of 2 lane roads, miles from train stations, with no public transportation servicing the area, currently serviced by wells, and according to the census bureau a per capita income in 2020 of $33,471, 25 minutes from Great America who has recently laid off employees due to an attendance decline, and changing it to commercial with 137 parking spaces with promises of development from a successful known landscape dump developer and an unknown ski hill developer. This is a huge undertaking for our small village. One small misstep with what was meant to be the next retail corridor in the long range plans will harm our necessary future growth. The residents are concerned for the long-term consequences of the village's actions of doing this with a developer who has never built a ski hill, and who seems to be unfamiliar if there are any requirements for using your product on any project much less one of this size. We cannot afford to end up with a 200 foot pile of construction land waste because your product's requirements were not followed and the 200 foot pile of fill dirt material could not be used for the ski hill that was proposed to get the annexation.

I have decided to go directly to the source as I know a colleague of mine did recently but with a few additional questions.

My technical questions are:

1. Can stormwater from retention ponds be used to mist SnowFlex?

2. Can your product be successfully put onto a 200 foot hill?

3. Are there specifications for the type of fill dirt material required and necessary to build a hill?

4. Are there specifications for the building of a safe hill that uses SnowFlex?

5. What is considered a realistic timeline to build and get a hill up and running that is 200 feet high built to your specs for 5 runs and 4 magic carpet lifts for skiers, tubers, and snowboarders?

6. Has a 200 foot hill ever been used in any of your projects?

7. What is the acreage required to have the correct degree for a 200 foot hill using SnowFlex?

There are many appropriate locations in the area to have a successful, well planned, and properly done SnowFlex project not only for a knowledgeable developer but for the village: an improperly planned project with an uninformed ill written annexation agreement can bring ruin to our small village. We would like to be certain the answers to these questions are known, dealt with, and clearly spelled out in the contract prior to the annexation.

Thank you for your very timely response as time is definitely of the essence.

Janet A Smart
[redacted]

A reply from Chris came back on August 23, 2022.

From: Chris <chris@snowflex.com>
To: Janet A Smart [redacted]
Cc: dsturmfx <dsturmfx@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 at 09:23:51 AM CDT
Subject: RE: a couple of questions

Hi Janet

Thank you for your email. I will do my best to answer your questions. I have also cc'd in our US Snowflex representative Dieter Sturm.

1. Can stormwater from retention ponds be used to mist SnowFlex?

I don't see why this would not be possible, though to my knowledge it has not been done before. It will take some time, but I will be able to work out the likely water usage for the ski slope (depending on the size of the slope), which should in turn give an idea of how big retention ponds would need to be.

2. Can your product be successfully put onto a 200 foot hill?

I have attached some pictures of a Snowflex slope in northern France, the hill there is just over 200ft high the length of the slope is 920ft long (in a straight line from top to bottom). The slope is built on a spoil heap, generated from open cast mining in the local area.

3. Are there specifications for the type of fill dirt material required and necessary to build a hill?

It is important that the dirt is well consolidated. We also design slopes to have interesting features, so whatever dirt is used it will need to be shaped by machines to suit our drawings. Once the shaping has been done we normally cover the dirt in either a layer of gravel, or preferably concrete approximately 3-4 inches deep. Concrete is preferred on made up ground as it greatly simplifies the anchorage which is necessary to prevent the ski surface from slumping down the slope.

4. Are there specifications for the building of a safe hill that uses SnowFlex?

As long as the dirt used is well consolidated, there are no strict specifications for a safe Snowflex hill. We are very conscious to avoid erosion and land slippage on our projects, steps to avoid this are ensuring that any part of the slope is not above 30 degrees and using the gravel and/or concrete underneath the ski slope. The material used would need to be environmentally sound in terms of what is necessary for public health safety, but that is not something that would be determined by us.

5. What is considered a realistic timeline to build and get a hill up and running that is 200 feet high built to your specs for 5 runs and 4 magic carpet lifts for skiers, tubers, and snowboarders?

It really depends on the square foot size of the project. We wouldn't especially recommend creating 5 separate runs, as you can make better use of an area and ski lift access, if the different abilities are catered for in one space, but we do highly recommend separate teaching and tubing areas for safety. As a rough idea timing wise once the hill has been created to an approximate shape, to create a slope like the northern France one in the attached pictures (108,000ft2), I'd estimate that the project could be completed in around a year.

6. Has a 200 foot hill ever been used in any of your projects?

I'll refer to the slope in northern France again, as it is the most similar to your project, though we have completed similar sized projects on natural hills in Turkey and Spain and numerous other smaller projects all over the world, including the Liberty Mountain Snowflex Centre in Lynchburg Virginia, which is approx. 85,000ft2.

7. What is the acreage required to have the correct degree for a 200 foot hill using SnowFlex?

For the ski slopes my instinct is that you would need a face around 150,000ft for 108,000ft2 of ski area, this is to accommodate the space needed for the lifts and the space in between the tubing, teaching and main ski slope areas. The average gradient for the ski slopes should be approx. 15 degrees.

I hope that this information is useful to you, please feel free to get in touch with any further questions.

Chris Thomas

Design Manager

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Here are the pictures of the slope in Northern France included with the email.

Again, please note how Briton Engineering designs Snowflex hills. From top to bottom, there is one main carpeted area of Snowflex material. In the second photo, you can clearly see the misters dotting the white astroturfing. This is how Snowflex works. It consumes a lot of water to keep the surface wet enough to provide for skiing when there is no snow--and not all of that water will be recycled. Snowflex's own website says only 70% is recycled on a hot, humid day (just like our summer).

In the winter, you can ski and snowboard and tube when the surface is covered with frost, ice, or snow. However, the hill requires "grooming", which the Briton engineers teach owners how to do. There are specific tools and techniques used, and failure to follow their guidelines leads to damage and costly replacement.

Other Considerations

Note that while Briton Engineering states it is possible to use a retention pond as a source of water, it has also never been done before. Extra time and cost are always associated with any project trying something for the first time. Since Dan Powell neglected to contact a representative of Snowflex with the details of his plan, it is unknown if the retention pond in his proposal is large enough.

Slippage in any construction project is a huge issue, and making sure there isn't any slippage in the construction of a ski hill, especially one 200 ft tall, should be left to the professionals. Dan Powell has already been cited for lack of compacted fill at his current business. You can visit www.120mudhill.org to view all the violations currently stacked against CHDS. Dan Powell owns a landscaping waste recycling center. He is not a developer. He is not in construction. He is not an engineer.

Soils need to be tested to determine whether they can be compacted to the degree necessary for a project such as this. Dan Powell likely is not even aware that such testing is needed. Due to the intricacies involved, different types of compaction equipment are used for different types of soils. Since Mr. Powell is not in the construction business, he likely does not possess the necessary equipment.

After the fill is compacted to specifications and the curves and features are created, the hill is covered in concrete. We have no market studies or research to believe that a ski hill of this nature will be successful in the Round Lake area. While expensive, a hill made of dirt and/or fill could be torn down. However, one covered in concrete will be ridiculously so. If a hair salon in a strip mall fails, another small business has the opportunity to move in. If this proposal fails, the Village of Round Lake will be left with a 200 ft tall concrete encrusted dome of vacant land.

One Last Note

This is part of Dan Powell's proposal, completed for him with the help of a professional design group. Already you can see the differences between his idea and what Briton Engineering does.

However, according to an actual engineer who looked at the angles, slope and other requirements set forth in the emails received by Janet, the Ski Hill as proposed by Dan Powell would see skiers, snowboarders, and tubers end their journey down 4 of the 5 runs by slamming into the split rail fence with protective netting, which runs in front of the retention pond.

Designing high tech ski hills should be left to professional engineers. Dan Powell of CHDS, LLC is not a professional engineer.