

Name of agency/organization: Leilani Estates Neighborhood Watch

Contact person/phone/email: Alice Lindahl [REDACTED]

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions.

1. In your experience, how prevalent is the issue of squatting and adverse possession?

It is very prevalent in Leilani estates. I drive a neighborhood watch route and see many people coming and going with their camping gear to vacant lots. On my street there are at present two actively used squatting sites. In the past, a squatter moved into a house that was up for sale and refused to move when the real estate agent tried to get him out of there. He claimed to be homesteading, and was acting under the advice of a social worker who worked with homeless people. The police came and said they could not do anything about it, even though the real estate agent had a copy of the deed and the contract she wrote with the owner to sell the property. The squatter was there for months but I do not know how they finally got rid of him.

2. In what communities and districts do squatting and adverse possession appear most prominent?

I don't know the details regarding where the worst and best situations are in other areas. I have seen squatters in many other places in PUNA. When we were buying our lots in Hawaii, we often "discovered" squatters on the lots we were visiting for consideration.

3. When you receive notice or a complaint about these situations, what is your normal course of action?

I am the block captain on my street. When residents have complained to the police that the squatters are causing them problems, the police won't even come out to investigate. They say "the owner is in jail, so there is nothing we can do". I have done some investigation on this and have found out that the owners are in Chile and have not paid dues or taxes for years.

4. What kinds of complications have arisen in the past that have prevented a successful resolution of the situation?

Lack of interest by police. I asked our "Leilani officer" Davey to go into the squatter site with me and he showed up at my house to tell me that he did not have the authority to trespass on to the site, and had changed his mind about looking into it.

5. For those situations that have been successfully resolved, please describe what happened.

We had a short term success when a particularly bold neighbor walked into the squatter encampment and read them the riot act, got real tough with them. They have not been back in months, but I expect to see them again.

6. What happens when you contact or try to contact the owner of record?

Both leilani estates and the county have addresses which are not used. The owner provided no forwarding address to either office.

7. What solutions would you recommend?

That Hawaii county pass an ordinance making it illegal to squat or camp on property that is not your own.

I also think that Hawaii county should construct homeless camps, manned by employees to control drugs, firearms and unruly behavior. There should be a safe dry place for homeless people to sleep.

8. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

I think that police should not allow squatters to camp long term in the parks along the Hilo waterfront. It's very creepy. I used to go to the park at Wailoa to have picnics with visitors, conduct watercolor painting sessions. Now the atmosphere is so threatening that it is not a park for residents anymore. All the human waste outside the bathrooms is awful, presumably because the bathrooms are locked up at night.