Residents might challenge vote on golf course building

By Art Thomason

It was a week of stomach butterflies for Jim Nosbisch and outrage for Walt Stromme.

And the final chapter that puts them on each side of a golf course community dispute in northeast Mesa is not yet written.

Stromme heads a group of more than 530 residents who are to meet Tuesday night to discuss their challenge of a homeowners association vote that paved the way for construction of a $8.5 million multipurpose facility at Apache Wells.

The 644-594 vote Wednesday allows the association to purchase the current, 44-year-old clubhouse for $700,000 and raze it to make room for the facility.

The close vote is also an indication of how the issue has divided the community, Stromme and Nobisch said.

"People are just furious," said Stromme, who is chairman Save Apache Wells, better known as SAW. "We're going to try to get an injunction to stop it."

Nosbisch, who is president of the Apache Wells Country Club Board, said paper ballots, including more than 400 absentee votes, were counted several times by a tabulation committee that included two members of SAW.

The country club board represents 485 homeowners who pay for the clubhouse's operations.

There are 1,412 homes in the community, many of them mobile homes that wrap around an 18-hole golf course.

"The new building will be state-of-the-art facility designed for use by the entire community," said Charon Johnson, co-chairman of the Community Long Range Planning Committee. "There will be several options for people to pay the assessment. We're not trying to drive anybody out of here."

Opponents have argued that Country Club Board wants the entire community to pay for golfer amenities.

But Nobisch said the board and the homeowners it represents have been footing the bill for the clubhouse and its operations. The building, he said, is deteriorating.